

Three Hours after Marriage:

A

C O M E D Y,

AS IT WAS ACTED AT THE

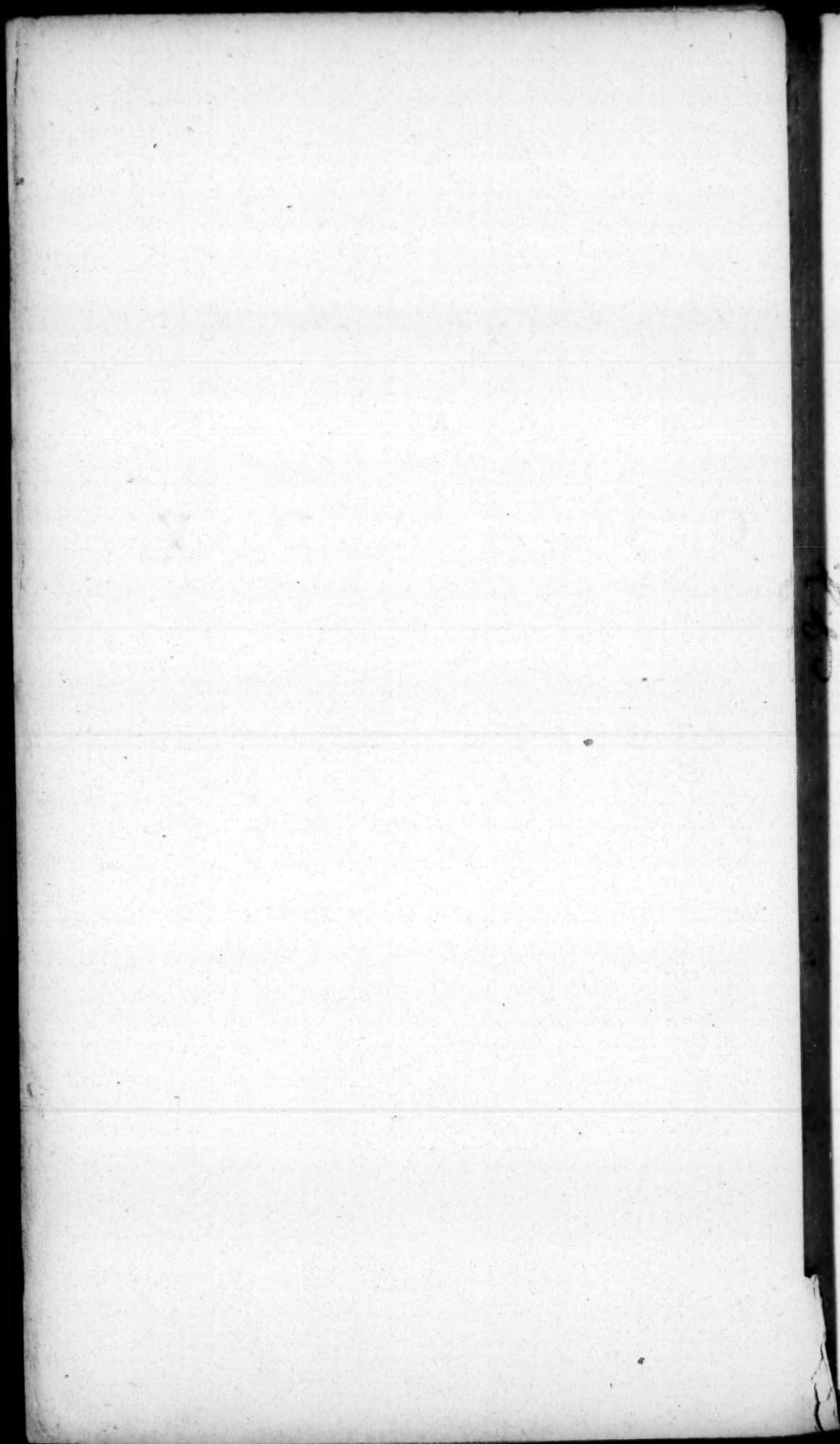
THEATRE ROYAL.

Rumpatur, quisquis rumpitur invidia.

MART.

VOL. III.

B



ADVERTISEMENT.

IT may be necessary to acquaint the Reader, that this Play is printed exactly as it is acted; for, tho' the Players, in Compliance with the Taste of the Town, broke it into five Parts in the Representation; yet, as the Action pauses, and the Stage is left vacant but three times, so it properly consists but of three Acts, like the Spanish Comedies.

I must farther own the Assistance I have received in this Piece from two of my Friends; who though they will not allow me the Honour of having their Names join'd with mine, cannot deprive me of the Pleasure of making this Acknowledgment.

JOHN GAY.

B 2

PRO-



P R O L O G U E.

AUTHORS are judg'd by strange capricious Rules,
The Great Ones are thought mad, the Small Ones Fools.
Yet sure the Best are most severely fated,
For Fools are only laugh'd at, Wits are hated.
Blockheads with Reason, Men of Sense abhor;
[But Fool 'gainst Fool, is barb'rous civil War.]
Why on all Authors then should Critics fall?
Since some have writ, and shewn no wit at all.
Condemn a Play of theirs, and they evade it,
Cry, "Damn not us, but damn the French that made it;"
By running Goods, these graceless Owlers gain,
Theirs are the Rules of France, the Plots of Spain:
But Wit, like Wine, from happier Climates brought,
Dash'd by these Rogues, turns English common Draught:
They pall Moliere's and Lopez' sprightly strain,
And teach dull Harlequins to grin in vain.
How shall our Author hope a gentle Fate,
Who dares most impudently—not translate.

P R O L O G U E.

*It had been civil in these ticklish Times,
To fetch his Fools and Knaves from foreign Climes;
Spaniard and French abuse to the World's End,
But spare Old England, lest you hurt a Friend.
If any Fool is by our Satire bit,
Let him hiss loud, to show you all—he's hit.
Poets make Characters as Salesmen Cloaths,
We take no measure of your Fops and Beaus;
But here all Sizes and all Shapes ye meet,
And fit yourselves—like Chaps in Monmouth-street.*

*Gallants look here! This * Fool's-Cap has an Air——
Goodly and smart,——with Ears of Issachar.
Let no one Fool engross it, or confine:
A common Blessing! now 'tis yours, now mine.
But Poets in all ages, had the Care
To keep this Cap, for such as will, to wear;
Our Author has it now, for ev'ry Wit
Of Course resign'd it to the next that writ:
And thus upon the Stage 'tis fairly † thrown,
Let him that takes it, wear it as his own.*

* Shews a Cap with Ears.

† Flings down the Cap, and *Exit*.

Dramatis Personæ.

M E N.

Foffile,	}	Doctors.	Mr. JOHNSON.
Poffum,			Mr. NORRIS.
Nautilus,			Mr. LEE.
Ptifan, Apothecary,			Mr. MILLER.
Plotwell,			Mr. CIBBER.
Underplot,			Mr. PINKETHMAN.
Sir Tremendous,			Mr. BOWMAN.
First Player,			Mr. WALKER.
Second Player,			Mr. QUIN,
Sailor.			Mr. BICKERSTAFF.

FOOTMEN, SERVANTS, &c.

W O M E N.

Mrs. Townly,	Mrs. OLDFIELD.
Mrs. Phœbe Clinket,	Mrs. BICKNELL.
Sarfnet,	Mrs. HUNT.
Prue,	Mrs. WILLIS

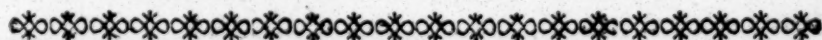
Three



Three Hours after Marriage.

A

C O M E D Y.



A C T I.

Enter Fossile leading Townley.

FOSSILE.

WELLCOME, my bride, into the habitation
of thy husband. The scruples of the
Parson——
Town. And the fatigue of the cere-
mony.——

Foss. Are at last well over.

Town. These blank licences are wonderfully commodious.—The clergy have a noble command in being rangers of the park of matrimony; produce but a warrant, and they deliver a lady into your possession: but I have no quarrel with them, since they have put me into so good hands.

Foss. I now proclaim a solemn suspension of arms between medicine and diseases. Let distempers suspend their

their malignant influence, and powders, pills, and potions their operations. Be this day sacred to my love. I had rather hold this hand of thine, than a dutchess by the pulse.

Town. And I this, than a hand of matadores.

Foss. Who knows but your relations may dispute my title to your person? Come, my dear, the seal of the matrimonial bond is consummation.

Town. Alas! what will become of me!

Foss. Why are thy eyes fix'd on the ground? Why so slow? and why this trembling?

Town. Ah! heedless creature that I was, to quit all my relations, and trust myself alone in the hands of a strange man!

Foss. Courage, thou best of my curiosities! Know that in husband, is comprehended all relations; in me thou seest a fond father.

Town. Old enough, o' my conscience. [*Aside.*

Foss. You may, you must trust yourself with me.

Town. Do with me as you please: yet sure you cannot so soon forget the office of the church. Marriage is not to be undertaken wantonly, like brute beasts. If you will transgress, the sin be upon your own head.

Foss. Great indeed is thy virtue, and laudable is thy modesty. Thou art a virgin, and I a philosopher: But learn, that no animal action, *quatenus animal*, is unbecoming of either of us. But hold! where am I going? Prithee, my dear, of what age art thou?

Town. Almost three and twenty.

Foss. And I almost at my grand climacterick. What occasion have I for a double-night at these years? She may be an *Alcmena*, but alas! I am no Thunderer.

[*Aside.*

Town. You seem somewhat disturb'd; I hope you are well, Mr. *Fossile*.

Foss. What business have I in the bed-chamber, when the Symptoms of age are upon me? Yet hold, this is the famous corroborative of *Crollins*; in this
vial

vial are included sons and daughters. Oh, for a draught of the *Aqua Magnanimitatis* for a vehicle! fifty drops of *Liquid Laudanum* for her dose would but just put us upon a Par. — *Laudanum* would settle the present ataxy of her animal spirits, and prevent her being too watchful. [Aside.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Sir your pistachio-porridge is ready. [Exit.

Foss. Now I think of it, my dear; *Venus*, which is in the first degree of *Capricorn*, does not culminate till ten; an hour, if astrology is not fallible, successful in generation.

Town. I am all obedience, Sir.

Foss. How shall I reward thee for so much goodness? Let our wedding as yet be a secret in the family. In the mean time I'll introduce my niece *Phæbe Clinket* to your acquaintance: But alas! the poor girl has a procidence of the pineal gland, which has occasioned a rupture in her understanding. I took her into my house to regulate my Oeconomy; but instead of puddings, she makes pastorals; or when she should be raising paste, is raising some ghost in a new Tragedy. In short, my house is haunted by all the underling players, broken book-sellers, half-voic'd singing-masters, and disabled dancing-masters in town. In a former will I had left her my estate; but I now resolve that heirs of my own begetting shall inherit. Yonder she comes in her usual occupation. Let us mark her a while.

Enter Clinket, and her maid bearing a writing desk on her back. Clinket writing, her head-dress stain'd with ink, and pens stuck in her hair.

Maid. I had as good carry a raree-show about the street. Oh! how my back akes!

Clink. What are the labours of the back to those of the brain? Thou scandal to the muses. I have now lost a thought worth a folio, by thy impertinence.

Maid.

Maid. Have not I got a crick in my back already, that will make me good for nothing, with lifting your great books?

Clink. Folio's, call them, and not great books, thou monster of impropriety: But have patience, and I will remember the three gallery-tickets I promis'd thee at my new Tragedy.

Maid. I shall never get my head-cloaths clear-starch'd at this rate.

Clink. Thou destroyer of learning, thou worse than a book-worm! Thou hast put me beyond all patience. Remember how my lyric ode bound about a tallow-candle; thy wrapping up snuff in an epigram; nay, the unworthy usage of my Hymn to *Apollo*, filthy creature! read me the last lines I wrote upon the *Deluge*, and take care to pronounce them as I taught you.

Maid. *Swell'd with a dropsy, sickly Nature lies,
And melting in a diabetes, dies.*

[*Reads with an affected tone.*]

Clink. Still without Cadence!

Maid. *Swell'd with a dropsy——*

Clink. Hold. I conceive——

*The roaring seas o'er the tall woods have broke,
And whales now perch upon the sturdy oak.*

Roaring? Stay. Rumbling, roaring, rustling. No; raging seas. [Writing.]

*The raging seas o'er the tall woods have broke,
Now perch, thou whale, upon the sturdy oak.*

Sturdy oak? No; steady, strong, strapping, stiff. Stiff? No, stiff is too short.

Fossile and Townley come forward.

*What feast for fish! Oh too luxurious treat!
When hungry dolphins feed on butchers meat.*

Foss. Niece, why, niece, niece! Oh, *Melpomene*, thou goddess of tragedy, suspend thy influence for a moment,

ment, and suffer my niece to give me a rational answer. This lady is a friend of mine; her present circumstances oblige her to take sanctuary in my house; treat her with the utmost civility. Let the tea-table be made ready.

Clink. Madam, excuse this absence of mind; my animal spirits had deserted the avenues of my senses, and retired to the recesses of the brain, to contemplate a beautiful idea. I could not force the vagrant creatures back again into their posts, to move those parts of the body that express civility.

Town. A rare affected creature this! If I mistake not, flattery will make her an useful tool for my purpose. [Exeunt *Townley*, *Clinket*, and *Maid*. [Aside.

Foss. Her jewels, her strong-box, and all her things left behind! If her uncle should discover her marriage, he may lay an embargo upon her goods.—I'll send for them.

Enter a boy with a letter.

Boy. This is the ho-ho-house.

Foss. Child, whom dost thou want?

Boy. Mistress *Townley's* ma-ma-maid.

Foss. What is your business?

Boy. A l-l-letter.

Foss. Who sent this letter?

Boy. O-o-one.

Foss. Give it me, child. An honest boy. Give it me, and I'll deliver it myself. A very honest boy.

Boy. So.

[Exit *Boy*.

Foss. There are now no more secrets between us. Man and wife are one.

MADAM,

Either I mistake the encouragement I have had, or I am to be happy to-night. I hope the same person will complete her good offices: I stand to articles. The ring

is a fine one ; and I shall have the pleasure of putting it on the first time.

This from your impatient R. P.

In the name of Beelzebub, what is this? *Encouragement! Happy to-night! same person! good offices!* Whom hast thou married, poor *Fossile*? Couldst thou not divert thyself still with the spoils of quarries and coal-pits, thy serpents and thy salamanders, but thou must have a living monster too! 'Sdeath! what a jest shall I be to our club! Is there no rope among my curiosities? Shall I turn her out of doors, and proclaim my infamy; or lock her up, and bear my misfortunes? Lock her up! Impossible. One may shut up volatile spirits. pen up the air, confine bears, lions and tygers, nay, keep even one's gold: but a wanton wife who can keep?

Enter Townley.

Town. Mrs. *Clinket's* Play is to be read this morning at the tea-table: will you come and divert yourself, Sir?

Foss. No: I want to be alone.

Town. I hope my company is not troublesome already. I am as yet a bride; not a wife. [*Sighs.*] What means this sudden change? [*Aside.*] Consider, Mr. *Fossile*, you want your natural rest: The bed would refresh you. Let me sit by you.

Foss. My head akes, and the bed always makes it worse.

Town. Is it hereabouts? [*Rubs his temples.*

Foss. Too sure. [*Turns from her.*

Town. Why so fretful Mr. *Fossile*?

Foss. No; I'll dissemble my passion, and pump her. [*Aside.*] Excess of joy, my dear, for my good fortune overcomes me. I am somewhat vertiginous, I can hardly stand.

Town. I hope I was ordain'd for thy support.

My

Foss. My disorder now begins to dissipate: it was only a little flatulency, occasion'd by something hard of digestion. But pray, my dear, did your uncle shut you up so close from the conversation of mankind?

Town. *Sarsnet* and *Shock* were my only company.

Foss. A very prudent young woman this *Sarsnet*; she was undoubtedly a good and faithful friend in your solitude.

Town. When it was her interest; but I made no intimacies with my chambermaid.

Foss. But was there no lover offer'd his service to a lady in distress?

Town. Tongue, be upon thy guard: these questions must be design'd to entrap me. [*Aside.*] A woman of my condition can't well escape importunity.

Foss. What was the name of that disagreeable fellow, who, you told me, teaz'd you so?

Town. His name? I think he had a thousand names. In one letter he was *Myrtillo*, in another *Corydon*, *Alexis*, and I don't know what.

Enter Sarsnet in haste to her Mistress: He runs and embraces her with great earnestness.

Foss. Dear Mrs. *Sarsnet*, how am I obliged to thee for thy services; thou hast made me happy beyond expression.—I shall find another letter upon her. [*Aside*

[*He gets his hand into Sarsnet's pocket, as searching for a letter.*

[*Whenever Sarsnet goes to whisper to her Mistress, he gets between them.*

Enter Ptisan.

Ptisan. Mrs. *Colloquintida* complains still of a dejection of appetite; she says that the genevre is too cold for her stomach.

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Foss.

Foss. Give her a quieting draught; but let us not interrupt one another. Good Mr. *Ptisan*, we are upon business.

[*Fossile gets between Sarfnet and Townley.*

Ptisf. The Colonel's spitting is quite suppress'd.

Foss. Give him a quieting draught. Come to-morrow, Mr. *Ptisan*; I can see no-body till then.

Ptisf. Lady *Varnish* finds no benefit of the waters; for the pimple on the tip of her nose still continues.

Foss. Give her a quieting draught.

Ptisf. Mrs. *Prudentia*'s tympany grows bigger and bigger. What, no pearl cordial! must I quiet them all?

Foss. Give them all quieting draughts, I say, or Blister them all, as you please. Your servant Mr. *Ptisan*.

Ptisan. But then Lady *Giddy*'s vapours. She calls her chambermaids nymphs; for she fancies herself *Diana*, and her husband *Acteon*.

Foss. I can attend no patient till to-morrow. Give her a quieting draught, I say.

[*Whenever Fossile goes to conduct Ptisan to the door, Sarfnet and Townley attempt to whisper; Fossile gets between them, and Ptisan takes that opportunity of coming back.*

Ptisf. Then Sir, there is Miss *Chitty* of the Boarding-school has taken in no natural sustenance for this week, but a halfpenny-worth of charcoal, and one of her mittins.

Foss. *Sarfnet*, do you wait on Mr. *Ptisan* to the door. To-morrow let my patients know I'll visit round.

[*A knocking at the door.*

Ptisf. Oh, Sir; here is a servant of the Countess of *Hippokekoana*. The Emetic has over-wrought, and she is in convulsions.

Foss.

Foss. This is unfortunate. Then I must go. Mr. *Ptisan*, my dear has some business with me in private. Retire into my closet a moment, and divert yourself with the pictures. There lies your way, Madam.

[*To Sarfnet.*

[*Exit Townley at one Door, and Sarfnet at the other.*

Mr. *Ptisan*, pray do you run before, and tell them I am just coming. [*Exit Ptisan.*

All my distresses come on the neck of one another. Should this fellow get to my bride before I have bedded her, in a collection of cuckolds, what a rarity should I make! What shall I do? I'll lock her up. Lock up my bride? My peace and my honour demand it, and it shall be so. [*Locks the door.*] *Thomas, Thomas!*

Enter Footman.

I dreamed last night I was robbed. The town is overrun with rogues. Who knows but the rascal that sent the letter may be now in the house? [*Afide.*] Look up the chimney, search all the dark closets, the coal-hole, the flower-pots, and forget not the empty butt in the cellar. Keep a strict watch at the door, and let nobody in till my return.

[*Exit footman. A noise at the closet-door.*

(*Within.*) Who's there?— I'm lock'd in. Murder! Fire!

Foss. Dear Madam, I beg your pardon.

[*Unlocks the door. Enter Townley.*

'Tis well you call'd. I am so apt to lock this door; an action merely mechanical, not spontaneous.

Town. Your conduct, Mr. *Fossile*, for this quarter of an hour has been somewhat mysterious. It has sug-

gested to me what I almost blush to name; your locking me up, confirms this suspicion. Pray speak plainly: what has caused this alteration? [*Fossile shows her the letter.*] Is this all? [*Gives him the letter back.*]

Foss. (reads) *Either I mistake the encouragement I have had. What encouragement?*

Town. From my Uncle, — if I must be your interpreter.

Foss. *Or I am to be happy to-night.*

Town. To be married. — If there can be happiness in that state.

Foss. *I hope the same Person.*

Town. Parson. Only a word mis-spell'd. — Here's jealousy for you!

Foss. *Will compleat her good offices. A she-parson, I find!*

Town. He is a *Welshman*. And the *Welsh* always say *her* instead of *his*.

Foss. *I stand to articles.*

Town. Of jointure.

Foss. *The ring is a fine one, and I shall have the pleasure of putting it on my self.*

Town. Who should put on the wedding-ring but the bridegroom?

Foss. I beseech thee, pardon thy dear husband. Love and jealousy are often companions, and excess of both had quite obnubilated the eyes of my understanding.

Town. Barbarous man! I could forgive thee, if thou hadst poison'd my father, debauch'd my sister, kill'd my lap-dog; but to murder my reputation! [*Weeps.*]

Foss. Nay, I beseech thee, forgive me. [*Kneels.*]

Town. I do: but upon condition your jealous fit never returns. To a jealous man a whisper is evidence, and a dream demonstration. A civil letter makes him thoughtful, an innocent visit mad. I shall try you, Mr. *Fossile*; for don't think I'll be denied company.

Foss. Nay, prithee, my dear; I own I have abused thee.

thee. But lest my marriage, and this simple story should take air in the neighbourhood, to-morrow we will retire into the country together, till the secret is blown over. I am call'd to a patient. In less than half an hour I'll be with you again, my dear.

[*Exit Fossile.*]

Town. *Plotwell's* letter had like to have ruin'd me. 'Twas a neglect in me, not to intrust him with the secret of my marriage. A jealous bridegroom! Every poison has its antidote; as credulity is the cause, so it shall be the cure of his jealousy. To-morrow I must be spirited away into the country; I'll immediately let *Plotwell* know of my distress: and this little time with opportunity, even on his wedding-day, shall finish him a compleat husband. Intrigue assist me! and I'll act a revenge that might have been worthy the most celebrated wife in *Boccace*.

Enter Plotwell and Clinket.

Ha! *Plotwell*! which way got he hither? I must caution him to be upon his guard.

Plotw. Madam, I am agreeably surpriz'd to find you here.

Town. Me, Sir? you are certainly mistaken, for I don't remember I ever saw you before.

Plotw. Madam, I beg your pardon. How like a truth sounds a lye from the tongue of a fine woman.

[*Aside.*]

Clink. This, Madam is Mr. *Plotwell*; a gentleman who is so infinitely obliging, as to introduce my play on the theatre, by fathering the unworthy issue of my muse, at the reading it this morning.

Plotw. I should be proud, Madam, to be a real father to any of your productions.

Clink. Mighty just. Ha, ha, ha! You know, Mr. *Plotwell*, that both a parrot and a player can utter human sounds, but we allow neither of them to be a judge of wit. Yet some of these people have had the assurance

assurance to deny almost all my performances the privilege of being acted. Ah! what a *Goût de travers* rules the understandings of the illiterate!

Plt. There are some, Madam, that nauseate the smell of a rose!

[*Whenever Plotwell and Townley endeavour to talk, she interrupts them.*]

Clink. If this piece be not rais'd to the sublime, let me henceforth be stigmatiz'd as a reptile in the dust of mediocrity. I am persuaded, Sir, your adopted child will do you no dishonour.

Town. Pray, Madam, what is the subject?

Clink. Oh! beyond every thing. So adapted for tragical machines! So proper to excite the passions! Not in the least incumber'd with episodes! The *Vray-semblance* and the *miraculous* are linked together with such propriety!

Town. But the subject, Madam?

Clink. The *Universal Deluge*. I chose that of *Deucalion* and *Pyrrha*, because neither our stage nor actors are hallow'd enough for sacred story.

Plotw. But, Madam—— [To Townley.]

Clink. What just occasion for noble description! These players are exceeding dilatory.——In the mean time, Sir, shall I be obliged to you and this lady for a rehearsal of a scene that I have been just touching up with some lively strokes.

Town. I dare assure you, Madam, it will be a pleasure to us both. I'll take this occasion to inform you of my present circumstances. [To Plotwell.]

Clink. Imagine *Deucalion* and *Pyrrha* in their boat. They pass by a promontory, where stands Prince *Hæmon* a former lover of *Pyrrha's*, ready to be swallow'd up by the devouring flood. She presses her husband to take him into the boat. Your part, Sir, is *Hæmon*; the Lady personates *Pyrrha*; and I represent *Deucalion*. To you Sir. [Gives Plotwell the manuscript.]

Plotw.

Plotw. *What ho ! there Sculler !* [reads.

Town. ————— Hæmon !

Plotw. ————— Yes, 'tis Hæmon !

Town. *Thou see'st me now sail'd from my former lodgings,*

*Beneath a husband's ark ; yet fain I would reward
Thy proffer'd love. But Hæmon, ah, I fear
To-morrow's eve will hide me in the country.*

Clink. Not a syllable in the part ! Wrong, all wrong !

Plotw. *Through all the town, with diligent enquiries,
I sought my Pyrrha——*

Clink. Beyond all patience ! the part, Sir, lies before you ; you are never to perplex the *Drama* with speeches *extempore*.

Plotw. Madam, 'tis what the top-players often do.

Town. *Though love denies, compassion bids me save thee.*

[Plotwell kisses her.

Clink. Fye Mr. Plotwell ; this is against all the decorum of the stage ; I will no more allow the libertinism of lip-embraces than the barbarity of killing on the stage. Your best tragedians, like the ladies of quality in a visit, never turn beyond the back part of the cheek to a salute, as thus Mr Plotwell. [Kisses Plotwell.

Plotw. I don't find in *Aristotle* any precept against kissing.

Clink. Yet I would not stand upon the brink of an indecorum.

Plotw. True, Madam, the finishing stroke of love and revenge should never shock the eyes of an audience. But I look upon a kiss in a comedy to be upon a par with a box on the ear in tragedy, which is frequently given and taken by your best authors.——

Clink. Mighty just ! for a Lady can no more put up a kiss than a gentleman a box on the ear.
Take, my muse, Sir, into your protection [gives him her play] the players I see are here. Your personating the author will infallibly introduce my play on the stage, and, in spite of their prejudice, make the theatre ring

ring with applause, and teach even that injudicious *Canaille* to know their own interest.

Enter Sir Tremendous with two Players.

Plotw. Gentlemen, this Lady who smiles on my performances, has permitted me to introduce you and my Tragedy to her tea-table.

Clink. Gentlemen, you do me honour.

1st Play. Suffer us Sir, to recommend to your acquaintance, the famous *Sir Tremendous*, the greatest critic of our age.

Plotw. *Sir Tremendous*, I rejoice at your presence; though no Lady that has an Antipathy, so sweats at a cat, as some authors at a critick. *Sir Tremendous*, Madam, is a gentleman who can instruct the town to dislike what has pleased them, and to be pleased with what they disliked.

Sir Trem. Alas! what signifies one good palate when the taste of the whole town is vitiated. There are not in all this *Sodom* of ignorance ten righteous critics, who do not judge things backward.

Clink. I perfectly agree with *Sir Tremendous*: Your modern Tragedies are such egregious stuff, they neither move terror nor pity.

Plotw. Yes, Madam, the pity of the audience on the first night, and the terror of the author for the third. *Sir Tremendous's* plays indeed have rais'd a sublimer passion, astonishment.

Clink. I perceive here will be a wit-combat between these beaux-esprits. *Prue*, be sure you set down all the similes.

Prue retires to the back part of the stage with pen and ink.

Sir Trem. The subjects of most modern plays are as ill chosen as——

Plotw. The patrons of their dedications.

Clinket makes signs to Prue.
Sir

Sir Trem. Their plots as shallow ——

Plotw. As those of bad poets against new plays.

Sir Trem. Their episodes as little of a piece to the main action, as——

Clink. A black gown with a pink-colour'd peticoat.
Mark that Prue. [Aside.]

Sir Trem. Their sentiments are so very delicate——

Plotw. That like whipt syllabub they are lost before they are tasted.

Trem. Their diction so low, that—that——

Plotw. Why, that their friends are forced to call it simplicity.

1st Play. Sir, to the play if you please.

2d Play. We have a rehearſal this morning.

Sir Trem. And then their thefts are so open——

Plotw. That the very French taylors can discover them.

Sir Trem. O what felony from the Ancients! What petty-larceny from the moderns! There is the famous *Iphigenia* of *Racine*, he stole his *Agamemnon* from *Seneca*, who stole it from *Euripides*, who stole it from *Homer*, who stole it from all the Ancients before him. In short there is nothing so execrable as our most taking Tragedies.

1st Play. O! but the immortal *Shakeſpear*, Sir,

Sir Trem. He had no judgment.

2d Play. The famous *Ben. Johnson*!

Clink. Dry.

1st Play. The tender *Otway*!

Sir Trem. Incorrect.

2d Play. *Etheridge*!

Clink. Meer chit-chat.

1st Play. *Dryden*!

Sir Trem. Nothing but a knack of versifying.

Clink. Ah! dear Sir Tremendous, there is that delicacy in your sentiments!

Sir Trem. Ah Madam! there is that juſtneſs in your notions!

Clink.

Clink. I am so charm'd with your manly penetration!

Sir Trem. I with your profound capacity!

Clink. That I am not able——

Sir Trem. That it is impossible——

Clink. To conceive——

Sir Trem. To express——

Clink. With what delight I embrace——

Sir Trem. With what pleasure I enter into——

Clink. Your ideas, most learned *Sir Tremerdous!*

Sir Trem. Your sentiments, most divine *Mrs. Clinket.*

2d Play. The play, for heaven's sake the play.

[*A tea-table brought in.*]

Clink. This finish'd *Drama* is too good for an age like this.

Plotw. *The Universal Deluge, or the Tragedy of Deucalion and Pyrrha.* [reads.]

Clink. Mr. *Plotwell*, I will not be deny'd the pleasure of reading it, you will pardon me.

3d Play. The Deluge! the subject seems to be too *recherché.*

Clink. A subject untouch'd either by Ancients or Moderns, in which are terror and pity in perfection.

1st Play. The stage will never bear it, can you suppose, Sir, that a box of ladies will sit three hours to see a rainy day, and a sculler in a storm? make your best of it, I know it can be nothing else.

2d Play. If you please, Madam, let us hear how it opens.

Clink. [reads.] *The scene opens, and discovers the heavens cloudy. A prodigious shower of rain, at a distance appears the top of the mountain Parnassus, all the fields beneath are overflowed, there are seen cattle and men swimming. The tops of steeples rise above the flood with men and women perching on their weather-cocks—*

Sir Trem. Begging your pardon, Sir, I believe it can be proved, that weather-cocks are of a modern invention. Besides, if stones were dissolved, as a late philosopher hath proved, how could steeples stand?

Plotw. I don't insist upon trifles. Strike it out.

Clink. Strike it out! consider what you do. In this they strike at the very foundation of the *Drama*. Don't almost all the persons of your second act start out of stones that *Deucalion* and *Pyrrha* threw behind them? This cavil is levell'd at the whole system of reparation of human race.

1st Play. Then the shower is absurd.

Clink. Why should not this gentleman rain, as well as other authors snow and thunder?— [reads,] *Enter Deucalion in a sort of waterman's habit, leading his wife Pyrrha to a boat—* Her first distress is about her going back to fetch a casket of jewels. Mind, how he imitates your great authors. The first speech has all the fire of *Lee*.

*Tho' heav'n wrings all the sponges of the sky,
And pours down clouds, at once each cloud a sea.*

Not the spring-tides—

Sir Trem. There were no spring-tides in the *Mediterranean*, and consequently *Deucalion* could not make that simile.

Clink. A man of *Deucalion's* quality might have travelled beyond the *Mediterranean*, and so your objection is answered. Observe, Sir *Tremendous*, the tenderness of *Otway*, in this answer of *Pyrrha*.

————— *Why do the Stays*

Taper my waste, but for thy circling Arms?

Sir Trem. Ah! *Anachronisms!* Stays are a modern habit, and the whole scene is monstrous, and against the rules of Tragedy.

Plotw. I submit Sir,—out with it.

Clink. Were the play mine, you should gash my flesh, mangle my face, any thing sooner than scratch my play.

Plotw.

Plotw. Blot and insert wherever you please—I submit myself to your judgment.

Plotwell rises, and discourses apart with Townley.

Sir Trem. Madam, Nonfense and I have been at variance from my cradle, it sets my understanding on edge.

2d Play. Indeed, Madam, with submission, and I think I have some experience of the stage, this play will hardly take.

Clink. The worst lines of it would be sufficiently clapt, if it had been writ by a known author, or recommended by one.

Sir Trem. Between you and I Madam, who understand better things, this gentleman knows nothing of poetry.

1st Play. The gentleman may be an honest man, but he is a damn'd writer, and it neither can take nor ought to take.

Sir Trem. If you are the gentleman's friend, and value his reputation, advise him to burn it

Clink. What struggles has an unknown author to vanquish prejudice! Suppose this play acts but six nights, his next may play twenty. Encourage a young author, I know it will be your interest.

2d Play. I would sooner give five hundred pounds than bring some plays on the stage; an audience little considers whether 'tis the author or the actor that is his'd, our character suffers.

1st Play. Damn our character——We shall lose money by it.

Clink. I'll deposit a sum myself upon the success of it. Well, since it is to be play'd—I will prevail upon him to strike out some few things.—Take the play, *Sir Tremendous.*

Sir

Sir Tremendous reads in a muttering tone.

Sir Trem. Absurd to the last degree [*strikes out*] palpable nonsense; [*strikes out*]

Clink. What all those lines! spare those for a Lady's sake, for those indeed, I gave him.

Sir Trem. Such stuff! [*strikes out.*] Abominable! [*strikes out.*] Most execrable!

1st Play. This thought must out.

2d Play. Madam, with submission, this metaphor—

1st Play. This whole speech——

Sir Trem. The Fable!

Clink. To you I answer——

1st Play. The Characters!

Clink. To you I answer——

Sir Trem. The diction!

Clink. And to you—Ah, hold, hold---I'm butcher'd, I'm massacred. For mercy's sake! Murder, Murder! ah!

[*faints.*]

Enter Fossile peeping at the Door.

Fossile. My house turned to a stage! and my bride playing her part too! what will become of me? but I'll know the bottom of all this. [*aside.*] I am surpris'd to see so many patients here so early. What is your distemper, Sir?

1st Play. The cholick, Sir, by a surfeit of green tea and damned verses.

Fossile. Your pulse is very high, Madam, [*to Townley.*] You sympathize, I perceive; for yours is somewhat feverish. [*to Plotwell.*] But I believe I shall be able to put off the fit for this time. And as for you, niece, you have got the poetical itch, and are possessed with nine devils, your nine muses; and thus I commit them and their works to the flames. [*Takes up a heap of papers, and flings them into the fire.*]

Clink. Ah! I am an undone woman.

Plotw. Has he burned any bank-bills, or a new Mechlin head-dress?

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D

Clink.

Clink. My works! my works!

1st Play. Has he destroyed the writings of an estate, or your billet-doux?

Clink. A pindaric ode! five similes! and half an Epilogue!

2d Player. Has he thrown a new fan, or your pearl necklace into the flames?

Clink. Worse, worse! The tag of the acts of a new Comedy! a Prologue sent by a person of quality! three copies of recommendatory verses! and two Greek mottoes!

Foff. Gentlemen, if you please to walk out.

2d Player. You shall have our positive answer concerning your Tragedy, Madam, in an hour or two.

[*Exeunt Sir Tremendous, Plotwell and Players.*]

Foff. Though this affair looks but ill; yet I will not be over rash: What says *Libanius*? *a false accusation often recoils upon the accuser*; and I have suffered already by too great precipitation. [Exit *Foffe*.]

Enter Sarsnet.

Townley. A narrow escape, *Sarsnet*! *Plotwell's* letter was intercepted and read by my husband.

Sarsnet. I tremble every joint of me. How came you off?

Townley. Invention flowed, I lied, he believed. True wife, true husband!

Sarsnet. I have often warned you, Madam, against this superfluity of gallants; you ought at least to have cleared all mortgages upon your person before you leased it out for life. Then, besides *Plotwell*, you are every moment in danger of *Underplot*, who attends on *Plotwell* like his shadow; he is unlucky enough to stumble upon your husband, and then I'm sure his shatterbrains would undo us at once.

Townley. Thy wit and industry *Sarsnet* must help me out. To day is mine, to-morrow is my husband's.

Sarsnet.

Sarsnet. But some speedy method must be thought of, to prevent your letters from falling into his hands.

Townley. I can put no confidence in my landlady Mrs. *Chambers*, since our quarrel at parting. So I have given orders to her maid to direct all letters and messages hither, and I have placed my own trusty servant *Hugh* at the door to receive them—but see, yonder comes my husband, I'll retire to my closet.

[*Exeunt Townley and Sarsnet.*]

Enter Fossile.

Fossile. O marriage, thou bitterest of potions, and thou strongest of astringents! This *Plotwell*, that I found talking with her, must certainly be the person that sent the letter. But if I have a *Bristol-stone* put upon me instead of a diamond, why should I by experiments spoil its lustre? She is handsome, that is certain. Could I but keep her to myself for the future! Cuckoldom is an acute case, it is quickly over; when it takes place, it admits of no remedy but palliatives.—Be it how it will, while my marriage is a secret—

Within. Bless the noble Doctor *Fossile* and his honourable lady. The city music are come to wish him much joy of his marriage. [*A flourish of fiddles.*]

Fossile. Joy and marriage! never were two words so coupled!

Within. Much happiness attend the learned doctor *Fossile* and his worthy and virtuous lady. The drums and trumpets of his majesty's guards are come to salute him— [*A flourish of drums and trumpets.*]

Fossile. Ah *Fossile!* wretched *Fossile!* into what state hast thou brought thyself! thy disgrace proclaimed by beat of drum! new-married men are treated like those bit by a *Tarantula*, both must have music: But where are the notes that can expel a wife? [*Exit.*]

A C T II.

Enter Fossile in a Footman's Cloaths.

FOSSILE.

A Special dog; this footman of my wife's! as mercenary as the porter of a first minister! why should she place him as a sentinel at my door? unquestionably, to carry on her intrigues. Why did I bribe him to lend me his livery? To discover those intrigues. And now, O wretched *Fossile*, thou hast debased thyself into the low character of a footman. What then? Gods and demi-gods have assumed viler shapes: They, to make a cuckold; I, to prove myself one. Why then should my metamorphosis be more shameful, when my purpose is more honest?

[Knocking at the Door, enter Footman.]

Footman. Ay, this is her livery. Friend, give this to your mistress.

[Gives a Letter to Fossile and Exit.]

[Fossile reads.] Madam, you have jilted me. What I gave you cost me dear; what you might have given me, would have cost you nothing. You shall use my next present with more respect. I presented you a fine snuff-box, you gave it to that coxcomb Underplot, and Underplot gave it to my wife. Judge of my surprise.

Freeman.

A fine circulation of a snuff-box! in time I shall have the rarest of my shells set off with gold hinges,
to

to make presents to all the fops about town. My *Conchæ Veneris*; and perhaps, even my *Nautilus*.

A Knocking at the Door. Enter an old Woman.

O. Woman. Can I speak with your good mistress? honest friend.

Fossile. No, she's busy.

O. Woman. Madam Wyburn presents her service and has sent this letter. [Exit.]

[Fossile reads.] *Being taken up with waiting upon merchants ladies this morning, I have sent to acquaint you, my dear sweet Mrs. Townley, that the Alderman agrees to every thing but putting away his wife, which he says is not decent at that end of the town. He desires a meeting this evening.*

Postscript. *He does not like the grocer's wife at all.*

Bless me! what a libidinous age we live in; neither his own wife, nor the grocer's wife! Will people like nobody's wife but mine!

Knocking at the door. Enter Footman, gives a letter, and Exit.

[Fossile reads.] *Sincerely, Madam, I cannot spare that sum; especially in monthly payments. My good friend and neighbour Pinch, a quiet, sober man, is content to go a third part, only for leave to visit upon sabbath days.*

Habakkuk Plumb.

Well, frugality is laudable even in iniquity! Now for this other.

[Opens the second Letter.]

[Fossile reads.] *Madam, I can't make you rich, but I can make you immortal.*

*Verses on Mrs. Susanna Townley, in the front box
dress'd in green.*

*In you the beauties of the spring are seen,
Your cheeks are roses, and your dress is green.*

A poor dog of a poet!—I fear him not.

Enter a ragged fellow with a letter.

Footman. My master is at present under a cloud—
He begs you will deliver this letter to your lady. [*Exit.*

[*Fossile reads.*] *I am reduced by your favours to ask
the thing I formerly deny'd; that you would entertain me
as a husband, who can no longer keep you as a mistress.*

Charles Bat.

Why did I part with this fellow? This was a proposal indeed, to make both me and himself happy at once! He sha'l have her, and a twelve-month's fees into the bargain. Where shall I find him?—Why was the mistress of all mankind unknown to thee alone? Why is nature so dark in our greatest concerns? Why are there no external symptoms of defloration, nor any pathognomic of the loss of virginity but a big belly? Why, has not lewdness its tokens like the plague? Why must a man know rain by the aking of his corns, and have no prognostic of what is of infinitely greater moment, Cuckoldom? Or if there are any marks of chastity, why is the enquiry allowed only to *Jews*, and denied to *Christians*? O *Townley, Townley*! once to me the fragrant Rose; now Aloes, Wormwood and Snake-root! But I must not be seen.

As Townley and Sarfnet enter, Fossile sneaks off.

Townley. *Sarfnet*, we are betrayed. I have discovered my husband posted at the door in *Hugh's* livery, he has intercepted all my letters. I immediately wrote this, which is the only thing that can bring us off.

Run

Run this moment to *Plotwell*, get him to copy it, and send it directed to me by his own servant with the utmost expedition. He is now at the chocolate-house in the next street.

Sarsenet. I fly Madam; but how will you disengage yourself from the affair with *Underplot*?

Townley. Leave it to me. Though he wants sense, he's handsome, and I like the fellow; and if he is lucky enough to come in my husband's absence.—— But pr'ythee, *Sarsnet*, make haste.

[*Exeunt Townley and Sarsnet, upon which Fossile re-enters: to him Underplot.*]

Under. Hearke'e, friend. I never talk with one of your coat, but I first tip him.

Fossile. Behold the lucre of a pimp! between the pox abroad, and my plague at home, I find a man may never want fees. [*aside.*] Your honour's commands, I pray. I long to serve you.

Under. Ah, boy! thou hast a rare mistress for vails. Come, I know thou art a fly dog. Can'st thou introduce me to her for a moment's conversation?

Fossile. Impossible.

Under. What, still impossible?

[*Gives more money.*]

Fossile. Still impossible.

Under. Poh, pox! But pr'ythee, friend, by the by: is there any thing in this report that she is married to the doctor here?

Fossile. I am afraid there is something in it.

Under. What a spirit does a jealous husband give to an intrigue! Pray, is he not a most egregious silly animal?

Fossile. Not exceeding wife indeed.

Under. Rich?

Fossile. He has money.

Under. That will save the expence of her gallants.

—Old?

Fossile. Ay, too old, Heaven knows.

Under.

Under. How came it into the puppy's head to marry?

Foss. By the instigation of Satan.

Under. I'll help the old fool to an heir.

Foss. No doubt on't. If the whole town can do it, he will not want one.

Under. Come, pr'ythee deal freely with me. Has *Plotwell* been here since the wedding?

Foss. He has, too sure! [*aside.*] He's a dangerous rival to you; if you have a mind to succeed, keep a strict watch upon him, that he may not get admittance before you.

Under. Well, since thou hast shewn thyself so much my friend, I'll let thee into a secret. *Plotwell* and I no sooner heard of the wedding, than we made a bett of an hundred guineas, who should dub the doctor first. Remember, you go twenty pieces with me.

Foss. But here is somebody coming. Away! You are sure of my interest. [*Exit Underplot.*]

Foss. This was well judged. I have a small territory coveted by two rival potentates. It is profound policy to make them watch one the other, and so keep the balance of power in my own hands. Certainly nothing so improves one's politics as to have a coquet for one's wife.

Enter a Footman with a Letter.

Footman. This is for your lady. Deliver it safe into her own hands. [*Exit Footman.*]

Fossile reads.] "Know, cruel woman, I have discovered the secret of your marriage; you shall have all the plague of a jealous husband, without the pleasure of giving him cause. I have this morning counterfeited billets-doux and letters from bawds; nay, I have sent pimps; some of which, I hope, are fallen into your old coxcomb's hands. If you deny me the pleasure of tipping him a real cuckold, at least I'll have the resentment to make him an
"imaginary

“ imaginary one. Know, that this is not the hundredth part of the revenge that shall be executed upon thee, by
R. P.

Townley peeping.] So! The letter works as I would have it. *[aside.]*

Fossile. How true is that saying of the philosopher! “ We only know, that we know nothing.” The eruption of those horns which seemed to make so strong a push, is now suppressed. Is the mystery of all these letters nothing but the revenge of a disappointed lover? The hand and seal are just the same with the Welchman’s that I intercepted a while ago. Truly, these Welch are a hot revengeful people. My wife may be virtuous; she may not. Prevention is the safest method with diseases and intrigues. Women are wanton, husbands weak, bawds busy, opportunities dangerous, gallants eager; therefore it behoves honest men to be watchful. But here comes my wife;—I must hide myself; for should I be detected, she might have a just cause of complaint for my impertinent curiosity.

[Exit Fossile.]

Enter Townley; and to her Sarfnet at the other Door.

Sarfnet. Your orders, Madam, have been executed to a tittle, and I hope with success.

Town. Extremely well. Just as we could have wish’d. But I can’t forgive that rascal *Hugh*. To turn him away would be dangerous. We will rather take the advantage of the confidence my husband has in him. Leave the husband to me, and do you discipline the footman. Such early curiosity must be crushed in the bud. *Hugh, Hugh, Hugh.* *[calls aloud, and rings.]* What is become of the rogue?

[Townley runs in, and drags out Fossile changing his cloaths with Hugh.]

Why firrah! must one call all day for you? *[Cuffs him.]*

Sarf. A rogue in disguise, got in to rob the house! thieves! thieves!

Enter

Enter Clinket, Prue with the Writing-Desk, and Servants.

Foss. Hift! Hift!—no noise! Prithce, dearee, look upon me. See, see, thy own dear husband. It is I.

Town. What an unfortunate woman am I! Could not you pass one day without an intrigue? and with a cook-wench too! for you could put on a livery for no other end. You wicked man!

Sarf. His coldness, Madam, is now no longer a mystery. Filthy monster! wast not thou provided with my mistress as a remedy for thy rampant unchastity?

Town. Was all your indifference to me for this! you brute, you! [Weeps.]

Foss. Nay, pr'ythee, dearee, judge not rashly. My character is established in the world. There lives not a more sober, chaste, and virtuous person than Doctor *Fossile*.

Town. Then why this disguise?

Foss. Since it must come out; ha, ha, ha, only a frolick on my wedding day between *Hugh* and I. We had a mind to exhibit a little mummery.

Clinket. What joy arises in my soul! to see my uncle in a dramatic character! Since your humour led you to the *Drama*, uncle, why would you not consult a relative muse in your own family? I have always used you as my physician; and why should not you use me as your poet?

Foss. Pr'ythee, dear, leave me a moment. This is a scandal to my gravity. I'll be with you, as myself, immediately.

[*Exeunt omnes, except Fossile and Hugh. As they are changing habits. Fossile says,*
As a mark of my confidence in thee, I leave thee guardian of my house while I go my rounds. Let none in but patients: wan, sickly fellows, no person in the least degree of bodily strength.

Hugh.

Hugh. Worthy doctor, you may rely upon my honour. [Exit Foffile.]

I have betrayed my mistress. My conscience flies in my face, and I can ease it no way but by betraying my master. [Knocking at the door.]

This is not the doctor; but he is dressed like him, and that shall be my excuse.

[He lets Plotwell in, Townley meets him: they embrace.]

Townley. *Hugh,* Go, wait at the door.

[Exit Hugh.]

Plotw. This disguise gives spirit to my intrigue. Certainly I am the first person that ever enjoyed a bride without the scandal of matrimony.

Town. I have a different relish, *Mr. Plotwell*; for now I can't abide you, you are so like my husband.

Plotw. Underplot, I defy thee. I have laid the wager, and now I hold the stakes.

Town. Opportunity, *Mr. Plotwell*, has been the downfall of much virtue.

[As he is leading her off, Enter Hugh.]

Hugh. Ah! Madam! the doctor! the doctor!

[Exit Hugh.]

Plotwell. Fear nothing; I'll stand it. I have my part ready. [Exit Townley.]

Enter Foffile.

Foff. I promised lady Longfort my eagle-stone. The poor lady is likely to miscarry, and 'tis well I thought on't. Hah! who is here! I do not like the aspect of the fellow. But I will not be over censorious.

[They make many bows and cringes in advancing to each other.]

Plotw. *Illustrissime domine, huc adveni—*

Foff. *Illustrissime domine—non usus sum loquere latinum—*—If you cannot speak English, we can have no linguar conversation.

Plotw.

Plotw. I can speak a little *Engliffe*. I have great deal heard of de fame of de great luminary of all arts and sciences, de illustrious doctor *Fossile*. I would make commutation (what do you call it?) I would exchange some of my tings for some of his tings.

Foss. Pray, Sir, what university are you of?

Plotw. De famous university of *Cracow*, in *Polonia minor*. I have cured de king of *Sweden* of de wound. My name be doctor *Cornelius Lubomirski*.

Foss. Your *Lubomirskis* are a great family. But what *Arcana* are you master of? Sir.

Plotw. [*Shows a large Snuff-box.*] Se dere, Sir, dat box de snuff.

Foss. Snuff-box.

Plotw. Right! Snuff-box. Dat be de very true gold.

Foss. What of that?

Plotw. Vat of dat? Me make dat gold my own self, of de lead of de great church of *Cracow*.

Foss. By what operations?

Plotw. By calcination; reverberation; purification; sublimation; amalgamation; precipitation; volatilization.

Foss. Have a care what you assert. The volatilization of gold is not an obvious process. It is by great elegance of speech called, *fortitudo fortitudinis fortissima*.

Plotw. I need not acquaint de illustrious doctor *Fossile*, dat all de metals be but unripe gold.

Foss. Spoken like a philosopher. And therefore there should be an act of parliament against digging of lead mines, as against felling young timber. But inform me, Sir, what might be your *menstruum*, snow-water, or may-dew?

Plotw. Snow-vater.

Foss. Right! Snow is the universal pickle of nature for the preservation of her productions in the hyemal season.

Plotw

Plot. If you vill go yourself, and not trust de servant, to fetch some of de right *Thames* sand dat be below de bridge, I vill shew you de naked *Diana* in your study, before I go hence.

Fossile. Perhaps you might. I am not at present disposed for experiments.

Plot. This bite won't take to send him out of the way; I'll change my subject. [*aside.*] Do you deal in longitudes, Sir?

Fossile. I deal not in impossibilities. I search only for the grand elixir.

Plot. Vat do you tink of de new metode of fluxion?

Fossile. I know no other but by *Mercury*.

Plot. Ha! ha! Me mean de fluxion of de quantity.

Fossile. The greatest quantity I ever knew, was three quarts a day.

Plot. Be dere any secret in de hydrology, zoology, mineralogy, hydraulics, acaustics, pneumatics, logarithmatechny, dat you do want de explanation of?

Fossile. This is all out of my way. Do you know of any hermaphrodites, monstrous twins, antidiluvian shells, bones, and vegetables?

Plot. Vat tink you of an antidiluvian knife, spoon, and fork, vid de mark of *Tubal Cain* in *Hebrew*, dug out of de mine of *Babylon*?

Fossile. Of what dimensions, I pray, Sir?

Plot. De spoon de bigger dan de modern ladle; de fork, like de great fire-fork; and de knife, like de cleaver.

Fossile. Bless me! This shews the stature and magnitude of those antidiluvians!

Plot. To make you convinced dat I tell not de lie, dey are in de *Turkey* ship at *Vapping*, just going to be disposed of. Me would go there vid you, but de business vil not let me.

Foss. An extraordinary man this! I'll examine him further. [*Aside.*] How could your country lose so great a man as you?

Plot. Dat be de secret. But because me vil have de fair correspondence vid de illustrious doctor *Fossile*, me vil not deny dat *Orpheus* and me had near run de same fate, for different reasons. I was hunted out of my country by de general insurrection of de women.

Fossile. How so pray?

Plot. Because me have prepare a certain liquor which discover whether a woman be de virgin or no.

Fossile. A curious discovery! Have you any of it still?

Plot. Dere it is, Sir. It be commonly called de *Lapis Lydius Virginitatis*, or Touchstone of Virginity.

[*Gives him a phial.*]

Fossile. It has the smell of your common hartshorn. But all your volatile spirits have a near resemblance.

Plot. Right, Sir. De distillation be made from de *Hippomanes* of a young mare. When de deflowered virgin take ten drops, she vill faint and sneeze, and de large red spot vill appear upon de cheek; which me call de spot of infamy. All de young bridegroom make de experiment. De aichbishop did make obligation to de nun to take it every ninth month. And I fly for the hurly-burly it make.

Enter Hugh.

Hugh. Sir, here is a patient in a chair.

Fossile. Doctor *Lubemirski*, let me conduct you into my study, where we will farther discuss the wonderful virtues of this liquor. Tell the patient I will attend him this instant. [*Exeunt Plotwell and Fossile*]

Enter Underplot in a Chair like a sick man.

Hugh. The doctor will wait upon you immediately.

[*Exit Hugh.*]

Under. I dogged *Plotwell* to this door in a doctor's habit. If he has admittance as a doctor, why not I as a patient? Now for a lucky decision of our wager; if I can't succeed myself, I will at least spoil his intrigue.

Enter

Enter Fossile.

Under. Ah! ah! have you no place? Ah! where can I repose a little? I was taken suddenly. Ah! ah! 'tis happy I was near the house of an eminent physician.

Fossile. Rest yourself upon that couch.

Under. If I lay a few minutes covered up warm in a bed, I believe I might recover.

[*Fossile feels his pulse. Plotwell peeps.*]

Plot. Underplot in disguise! I'll be his doctor, and cure him of these frolics. [*Aside.*]

Fossile. What are your symptoms, Sir? A very tempestuous pulse, I profess!

Under. Violent head-ach, ah! ah!

Fossile. All this proceeds from the fumes of the kitchen, the stomachic digester wants reparation for the better concoction of your aliment: But, Sir; is your pain pungitive, tensive, gravitive, or pulsatory?

Under. All together, ah!

Fossile. Impossible Sir; but I have an eminent physician now in the house, he shall be consulted. Doctor *Lubomirski*, here is a person in a most violent *Cephalalgia*; a terrible case!

Enter Plotwell.

Fossile. Feel his pulse. [*Plotwell feels it.*] You feel it Sir, strong hard and labouring.

Plot. Great plenitude, Sir.

Fossile. Feel his belly, Sir! A great tension and heat of the abdomen — A hearty man, his muscles are torose; how soon are the strongest humbled by diseases! Let us retire, and consult.

Enter Sarsnet in haste.

Sarsnet. My mistress approves your design, bear it out bravely, perhaps I shall have a sudden opportunity of conveying you into her bed-chamber, counterfeiting a fainting fit, and rely upon me. [*Exit.*]

Under.

F

Enter

Under. As yet I find I am undiscovered by *Plotwell*; neither is his intrigue in such forwardness as mine, though he made a fair push for it before me. [*Aside.*

[*Fossile and Plotwell come forward.*

Foss. I am entirely for a clyster.

Plot. My opinion is for de strong vomit.

Foss. Bleed him.

Plot. Make de scarification: give me de lancet, me vill do it myself, and after dat vill put de blister to de sole of de feet.

Foss. Your dolor proceeds from a frigid *intemperies* of the brain, a strong disease! the enemy has invaded the very citadel of your microcosm, the magazine of your vital functions; he has sat down before it; yet there seems to be a good garrison of vital spirits, and we don't question to be able to defend it.

Plot. We will cannonade de enemy wid pills, bombard him wid de bolus, blow him up wid volatiles, fill up de trenches wid de large inundation of apozems, and dislodge him wid de stink-pot. Let de apothecary bring up de artillery of medicine immediately.

Foss. True; we might unload the stomach by gentle emetics, and the intestines by clysters stimulative, carminative, and emollient, with strong hydroticks, quiet the spasms of the viscera by paregorics, draw off the stagnant blood by deep scarifications, and depurate its fæculencies by volatiles; after this, let there be numerous blisters and potential cauteries—I consult my patient's ease; I am against much physick—he faints, he is apoplectic, bleed him this moment.

Plot. Hoy, de servant dere! Make hast, bring de pan of hot coals; or de red hot iron to make application to de temples.

Enter Hugh.

Hugh. Here's the poker red hot from the fire.

Plot. Very vell! Make de burn dere, exactly dere.

[*putting the poker near his head.*

Under-

Underplot. Hold, hold, am I to be murdered? [*starts up.*] I know you, *Plotwell*, and was I not obliged by honour and friendship, I'd expose you to the doctor.

[*Aside to Plotwell.*]

Plot. Very lunatic, mad. Fetch de cord to make de tie upon de leg and de arm, take off thirty ounces of blood, and den plunge him into de cold bath.

Foss. Your judgment, Doctor *Lubomirsky*, is excellent, I will call my servants to assist us.

Underplot. Hearkee old put; I came to take your advice, and not that *French* son of a whore's scarifications; and so plague take you both!

[*Exit Underplot and Hugh.*]

Foss. Doctor *Lubomirsky*, this phial that you have intrusted in my custody, shall be with acknowledgment returned after a few experiments; I must crave your indulgence: diseases, you know, Sir, are impertinent, and will tie themselves to no hours. Poor Lady *Hypokoana*!

Plotw. Ah Sir! I beg your pardon, if you make visit to de patient, me vill divert myself in your study till you make return.

Foss. That cannot be, I have a lady just coming to consult me in a case of secrecy.

Plot. Have you not de wife? me vill make conversation wid de ladies till you come.

Foss. They see no company in the morning, they are all in *dishabillée*. Most learned Doctor *Lubomirsky*, your humble servant.

Plot. Most illustrious Doctor *Fossile*, me be, wid de profoundest adoration.—

Foss. With the greatest admiration——

Plot. Your most humble——

Foss. Most obedient servant.

Plot. Ah, Monsieur, point de ceremonie.

[*Exit Plotwell.*]

Fossile. Hugh! [*Enter Hugh.*] bring me a pint of sack; let your mistress know I want to see her. Take

care her orders be obeyed, and that her trunks and boxes be immediately brought hither. *Sarsnet* will give you directions.

[*Exit Hugh.* *Fossile sits down on a couch.*
Ah *Fossile*! if the cares of two hours of a married life have so reduced thee, how long can'st thou hold out! To watch a wife all day, and have her wake thee all night! 'Twill never do. The fatigue of three fevers, six small-poxes, and five great ones, is nothing to that of one wife. Now for my touchstone; I will try it upon her presently. If she bear it to-day—I am afraid she will bear it to-morrow too.

Enter Hugh with a bottle of sack, and after him Townley. Hugh gives the bottle and glass to *Fossile*, and *Exit*.

Sit down by me, my dear, I was going to refresh myself with a glass of canary. You look pale. It will do you good.

Town. Faugh. Wine in the morning!

[*Fossile drinks, and fills again, and drops some of the liquor into the glass.* ;

What is the meaning of this? Am I to be poisoned!

[*Aside.*
Foss. You must drink it. Sack is sacred to *Hymen*; of it is made the nuptial posset.

Town. Don't press me, Mr. *Fossile*, I nauseate it. It smells strangely. There is something in it.

Foss. An ill symptom! She can't bear the smell.
[*Aside.*] Pray, my dear, oblige me.

Town. I'm for none of your slops. I'll fill myself.

Foss. I must own, I have put some restorative drops in it, which are excellent. I may drink it safely.

[*Aside.*] [*Drinks.*] The next glass I prepare for you.
[*Fills, and pours some drops in.*

[*Town-*

[Townley drinks. Fossile runs behind to support her; then pores upon her cheek, and touches it with his finger.

Town. Your insolence is insupportable. 'Twas but this moment you suspected my virtue; and now my complexion. Put on your spectacles. No Red was ever laid upon these cheeks. I'll fly thee, and die a maid, rather than live under the same roof with jealousy and caprice.

Foss. O thou spotless innocence! I cannot refrain from tears of joy. Forgive me, and I'll tell thee all. These drops have been a secret in our family for many years. They are call'd the *Touchstone of Virginity*. The males administer it to the brides on their wedding-day; and by its virtue have ascertained the honour of the *Fossiles* from generation to generation. There are family customs, which it is almost impious to neglect.

Town. Had you married a person of *doubtful* reputation——Put me, Mr. Fossile!

Foss. I did not indeed suspect thee. But my mother obliged me to this experiment with her dying words.—My wife is chaste: And to preserve her so, 'tis necessary that I have none but chaste servants about her. I'll make the experiment on all my female domestics. [Aside.] I will now, my dear, in thy presence, put all my family to the trial. Here! bid my niece, and all the maid-servants come before me. [Calling out.

Enter Clinket, Prue, and Servants.

Give ear, all ye virgins: We make proclamation in the name of the chaste *Diana*, being resolv'd to make a solemn essay of the virtue, virginity, and chastity of all within our walls. We therefore advise, warn, and precaution all spinsters, who know themselves blemish'd, not on any pretence whatsoever to taste these our drops,
which

which will manifest their shame to the world by visible tokens.

Clink. I abominate all kind of drops. They interrupt the series of ideas. But have they any power over the virgin's dreams, thoughts, and private meditations?

Foss. No they do not affect the *motus primo primi*, or intentions; only actualities, niece.

Clink. Then give it me. I can drink as freely of it, as of the waters of *Helicon*. My love was always *Platonic*. [Drinks.]

Foss. Yet I have known a *Platonic* lady lodge at a midwife's. [Fossile offers it round.]

First Woman. I never take physic.

Foss. That's one. Stand there. My niece professes herself a *Platonic*. You are rather a *Cartesian*.

Clink. Ah, dear uncle! How do the *Platonics* and *Cartesians* differ?

Foss. The *Platonicks* are for ideas, the *Cartesians* for matter and motion.

Town. Mr. *Fossile*, you are too severe.

Second Woman. I am not thirsty. [Curtsies.]

Foss. There's two. Stand there.

Prue. My mistress can answer for me. She has taken it.

Foss. She has. But however stand there, among the *Cartesians*.

Third Woman. My innocence would protect me, though I trod over red-hot iron. Give me a brimmer.

[She takes a mouthful and spits it out again.]

Foss. 'Twas a presumptuous thing to gargle with it; but however, madam, if you please---walk among the *Cartesians*. [Two young wenches run away.]

Clink. *Prue*, follow me. I have just found a rhyme for my *Pindaric*. [They all sneak off.]

Foss. All gone! What no more ladies here? No more ladies? [Looking to the audience.] O that I had but a boarding-school, or a middle-gallery!

Enter

Enter Sarsnet, followed by two porters bearing a chest.

Set down the things here: There is no occasion for carrying them up stairs, since they are to be sent into the country to-morrow. *[Ex. Porters.]*

What have I done? My marriage, these confounded whimsies, and Doctor *Lubomirsky*, have made me quite forget poor Lady *Hippokekoana*. She was in Convulsions, and, I am afraid, dead by this time. *[Ex. Foffile.]*

Sarsnet. I have brought you a present, Madam, make good use of it. So I leave you together.

[Exit Sarsnet.]

[Townley opens the chest: Plotwell, who was covered with a gown and petticoat, gets out.]

Town. Never was any thing so lucky. The Doctor is just this minute gone to a patient.

Plot. I tempt dangers enough in your service. I am almost crippled in this chest-adventure. Oh my knees! Pr'ythee, my dear, lead me to a bed where I may stretch myself out. *[Leading her off.]*

Enter Sarsnet.

Sarf. Oh Madam! yonder is the Doctor in deep discourse with *Underplot*: I fear he has dogged me, and betrayed us. They are both coming back together.

[Exit Sarsnet.]

Plot. I'll shrink snug into my shell again.

Town. That he may directly pop upon you! The trunk will be the first place he will examine. Have you no presence of mind?---You fit for an intrigue!

Plot. What shall I do?

Town. Fear not. You shall be invisible on this very spot.

Plot. What do you mean? He's just at the door. You intend to discover me.

Town.

Town. Mistrust me not: you shall walk out before his face at that very door, though he bring in a hundred spies, and not one of them shall perceive you.

Plot. Don't trifle. Are you mad? [*Knocking at the door.*] Nay, now 'tis too late.

Town. Arm thyself with flounces, and fortify thyself with whalebone; enter beneath the *cupola* of this petticoat.

Plot. The best security in the world! an old fellow has seldom any thing to do beneath that circumference.

Town. No more. But under it immediately.

[*Plotwell gets under it.*]

Thus *Venus*, when approaching foes assail,
Shields her *Aeneas* with a silken veil.

Enter Fossile.

Town. O my dear, you come opportunely. How do you like my fancy in this new petticoat? There is something in it so odd!

Foss. You have another in your chest much odder. I want to see that.

Town. How jaunty the flounces!

Foss. Ay, 'tis plain she would lure me from the chest; there I shall find him. [*Aside.*]

Town. The lace! the fringe!

Foss. All this is nothing to the embroider'd sattin. Pr'ythee, my dear, give me the key.

Town. Sure never was any thing so prettily disposed. Observe but the air of it: So *degagée*: But the lining is so charming.

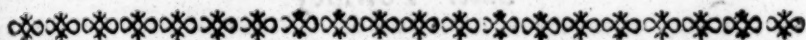
[*She walks to the door, and Fossile to the trunk. Plotwell kisses her out of the top of the petticoat, and then goes off.*]

[*As Fossile is cautiously opening the trunk with his sword drawn, Townley comes up to him.*]

What more of your frolics, Mr. *Fossile*? What time of the moon is this?

Foss.

Foss. This *Underplot* is a confounded villain, he would make me jealous of an honest civil gentleman, only for an opportunity to cuckold me himself. *Aside.* Come, my dear, forget all that is past. I know—I have proved thee virtuous. *[Exeunt.]*



A C T. III.

Enter FOSSILE. with a Phial in his Hand.

FOSSILE.

THIS is all we have for the flying dragon so celebrated by antiquity. A cheap purchase! It cost me but fifteen guineas. But the Jew made it up in the butterfly and the spider.

Enter two porters bearing a Mummy.

Oh! here's my mummy. Set him down. I am in haste. Tell Captain *Bantam*, I'll talk with him at the Coffee-house. *[Exeunt porters.]*

Enter two porters bearing an Alligator.

A most stupendous animal! Set him down.

[Exeunt porters]

Poor Lady *Hippokekoana*'s convulsions! I believe there is a fatality in it, that I can never get to her. Who can

can I trust my house to in my absence? Were my wife as chaste as *Lucretia*, who knows what an unlucky minute may bring forth! In cuckoldom, the art of attack is prodigiously improved beyond the art of defence. So far it is manifest, *Underplot* has a design upon my honour. For the ease of my mind, I will lock up my wife in this my *musæum*, 'till my return.

Enter Townley.

You will find something here, my dear to divert yourself.

Town. I hate the sight of these strange creatures; but since I am Mr. *Fossile*'s wife, I shall endeavour to conquer my aversion.

Foss. Thou may'st safely be here to-day, my dear; to-morrow thou should'st no more enter this room than a *pest-house*. 'Tis dangerous for women that are impregnated.---But poor Lady *Hippokekoana* suffers all this while. [*Ex. Fossile with a key in his hand.*]

Town. Since he has lock'd me in, to be even with him, I'll bolt him out.

[*Plotwell, dress'd like a Mummy, comes forward.*]

Plot. Thus trav'ling far from his *Egyptian* tomb,
Thy *Anthony* salutes his *Cleopatra*.

Town. Thus *Cleopatra*, in desiring arms, receives her *Anthony*—But pr'ythee dear pickled *Hieroglyphic*, who so suddenly could assist thee with this shape?

Plot. The Play-house can dress mummies, bears, lions, crocodiles, and all the monsters of *Lybia*. My arms, Madam, are ready to break their paste-board prison to embrace you.

Town. Not so hasty. Stay till the jealous fool is out of sight.

Plot. Our ill stars and the devil have brought him back so often—

Town.

Town. He can never parry this blow, nor grow jealous of his *mummy*. A *mummy* is his intimate friend.

Plot. And a man cannot easily be cuckolded by any body else.

Town. Here may'st thou remain the ornament of his study, and the support of his old age. Thou shalt divert his children. I will bring thee legs of pullets, remnants of tarts, and fragments of deserts. Thou shalt be fed like *Bell* and the *Dragon*.

Plot. But Madam; before you entertain me as your mummy in ordinary, you ought to be acquainted with my abilities to discharge that office. Let me slip off this habit of death, you shall find I have symptoms of life.—Thus *Jove* within the milk-white Swan compressed his *Leda*.

[*Underplot in the Alligator crawls forward, then rises up and embraces her.*]

Underp. Thus *Jove* within the serpent's scaly folds,
Twin'd round the *Macedonian Queen*.

Town. Ah!

[*shrieks.*]

Plot. Fear not, Madam. This is my evil genius

Underplot, that still haunts me. How the devil got you hither?

Underp. Why should not the Play-house lend me a crocodile as well as you a *mummy*?

Town. How unlucky is this! [*Aside.*] Nay, I don't know but I may have twenty lovers in this collection. You snakes, sharks, monkeys, and mantygers, speak, and put in your claim before it is too late.

Underp. Mr. *Mummy*, you humble servant; the Lady is pre-engaged.

Plot. Pray, Mr. *Crocodile*, let the Lady make her own choice.

Underp. *Crocodile* as I am, I must be treated with common humanity. You can't, Madam, disown the message you sent me.

50 THREE HOURS AFTER MARRIAGE.

Town. Well! Ye pair of *Egyptian* lovers, agree this matter between you, and I will acquit myself like a person of honour to you both.

Plot. Madam! If I don't love you above all your sex, may I be banished the studies of virtuoso's; and smoak'd like *Dutch* beef in a chimney——

Underp. If I don't love you more than that stale mummy, may I never more be proclaimed at a show of monsters, by the sound of a glass-trumpet.

Plot. May I be sent to *Apothecary's-hall*, and beat up into *Venice-treacle* for the fleet and the army, if this heart——

Underp. May I be stuff'd with straw, and given to a mountebank, if this soul——

Plot. Madam, I am a human creature. Taste my balsamic kifs.

Underp. A lover in swadling-clouts! What is his kifs, to my embrace?

Plot. Look upon me, Madam. See how I am embroidered with hieroglyphics.

Underp. Consider my beautiful row of teeth.

Plot. My balmy breath.

Underp. The strong joints of my back.

Plot. My erect stature.

Underp. My long tail.

Town. Such a contest of beauty! How shall I decide it?

Plot. Take me out of my shell, Madam, and I'll make you a present of the kernel.

Underp. Then I must be upon a level with him, and be uncrocodiled.

Town. Keep both of you your shapes, and we are in no fear of a surprize from the Doctor: If you uncase, his presence would undo us. Sure never was any thing so unlucky—I hear his footsteps; quick to your posts! [Mummy and Crocodile run to their places.

[Enter

[Enter Fossile, Dr. Nautilus, and Dr. Possum:

Naut. Much joy to the learned Doctor *Fossile*! To have a *Mummy*, an *Alligator*, and a *Wife*, all in one day, is too great happiness for mortal man!

Possum. This an *Alligator*! Alack-a-day, brother *Nautilus*, this is a meer lizard, an est, a shrimp to mine.

Naut. How improving would it be to the female understanding, if the closets of the Ladies were furnished, or, as I may say, ornamented and embellished with preserved butterflies, and beautiful shells, instead of *China* jars, and absurd *Indian* pictures.

Town. Now for a stratagem to bring off my unsuccessful pair of gallants.

[*Aside.*

[Exit *Townley*.

Foss. Ah, Dr. *Nautilus*, how have I languished for your feather of the bird *Porphyryon*!

Nautilus. But your dart of the *Mantichora*!

Foss. Your haft of an antediluvian trowel, unquestionably the tool of one of the *Babel* masons!

Nautilus. What's that to your fragment of *Seth's* pillar?

Possum. Gentlemen, I affirm I have a greater curiosity than all of them.—I have an entire leaf of *Noah's* journal aboard the *Ark*, that was hewn out of a porphyry pillar in *Palmyra*.

[*Fossile* opens the case of the *Mummy*.

Naut. By the formation of the muscular parts of the visage, I conjecture that this mummy is male.

Possum. Male, brother! I am sorry to observe your ignorance of the symmetry of a human body. Do but observe the projection of the hip; besides, the bloom upon the face; 'tis a female beyond all contradiction.

Foss. Let us have no rash dispute, brothers; but proceed methodically——Behold the vanity of mankind! [*pointing to the Mummy.*] Some *Pictemy* perhaps!——

52 THREE HOURS AFTER MARRIAGE.

Naut. Who by his pyramid and pickle thought to secure to himself death immortal.

Foss. His pyramid, alas! is now but a wainscot case.

Possum. And his pickle can scarcely raise him to the dignity of a collar of brawn.

Foss. Pardon me, Dr. *Possum*: The *Musæum* of the curious is a lasting monument. And I think it no degradation to a dead person of quality, to bear the rank of an anatomy in the learned world.

Naut. By your favour, Dr. *Possum*!—A collar of brawn! I affirm he is better to be taken inwardly than a collar of brawn.

Foss. An excellent medicine! He is hot in the first degree, and exceedingly powerful in some diseases of women.

Naut. Right, Dr. *Fossile*; for your *Asphaltion*——

Possum. *Pice-Asphaltus*, by your leave.

Naut. By your leave, Dr. *Possum*, I say *Asphaltion*.

Possum. And I positively say, *Pice-Asphaltus*.

Naut. If you had read *Dioscorides* or *Pliny*——

Possum. I have read *Dioscorides*. And I do affirm *Pice-Asphaltus*.

Foss. Be calm, gentlemen. Both of you handle this argument with great learning, judgment and perspicuity. For the present, I beseech you to concord, and turn your speculations on my *Alligator*.

Possum. The skin is impenetrable even to a sword.

Naut. Dr. *Possum*, I will shew you the contrary.

[*Draws his sword.*]

Possum. In the mean time I will try the mummy with his knife, on the point of which you shall smell the pitch, and be convinced that it is the *Pice-Asphaltus*.

[*Takes up a rusty knife.*]

Foss. Hold, Sir! You will not only deface my Mummy, but spoil my *Roman* sacrificing knife.

Enter

Enter Townley.

Town. I must lure them from this experiment, or we are discovered. *[Aside.*

[She looks through a telescope.

What do I see! Most prodigious! A star as broad as the moon in the day-time! *[The doctors go to her.*

Pos. Only a *Halo* about the sun, I suppose.

Naut. Your suppositions, doctor, seem to be groundless. Let me make my observation.

[Nautilus and Possum struggle to look first.

Town. Now for your escape:

[To Plotwell and Underplot. They run to the door, but find it lock'd.

Under. What an unlucky dog I am!

Town. Quick.—Back to your posts.—Don't move, and rely upon me. I have still another artifice.

[They run back to their places. Exit Townley.

Naut. I can espy no celestial body but the Sun.

Pos. Brother *Nautilus*, your eyes are somewhat dim; your sight is not fit for *Astronomical Observations*.

Foss. Is the focus of the glass right? Hold Gentlemen, I see it; about the bigness of *Jupiter*.

Naut. No phenomenon offers itself to my speculation.

Pos. Point over yonder chimney: Directly South.

Naut. Thitherward, begging your pardon, Dr. *Possum*, I affirm to be the North.

Foss. East.

Pos. South.

Naut. North. Alas! What an ignorant thing is vanity! I was just making a reflection on the ignorance of my brother *Possum*, in the nature of the *Crocodile*.

Pos. First, brother *Nautilus*, convince yourself of the composition of the *Mummy*.

Naut. I will insure your *Alligator* from any damage; yet his skin I affirm once more to be penetrable.

[Draws his sword.

Pos.

Pof. I will not deface any hieroglyphic.

[*Goes to the Mummy with the knife.*]

Foff. I never oppose a luciferous experiment. It is the beaten highway to truth. [Plotwell and Underplot leap from their places; the Doctors are frightened.]

Pof. Speak, I conjure thee! Art thou the ghost of some murdered Egyptian monarch?

Naut. A rational question to a Mummy! But this monster can be no less than the devil himself; for Crocodiles don't walk.

Enter Townley and Clinket. Townley whispers Clinket.

Fof. Gentlemen, wonder at nothing within these walls; for ever since I was married, nothing has happened to me in the common course of human life.

Clink. Madam, without compliment, you have a fine imagination. The masquerade of the Mummy and Crocodile is extremely just; I would not rob you of the merit of the invention; yet since you make the compliment, I shall be proud to take the whole contrivance of this masquerade upon myself. [*To Townley.*] Sir, be acquainted with my masqueraders. [*To Fossile.*]

Foff. Thou female imp of Apollo, more mischievous than Circe, who fed gentlemen of the army in a hogstye! What mean you by these gambols? This Mummy, this Crocodile?

Clink. Only a little mummery, uncle.

Foff. What an outrageous conceit is this! Had you contented yourself with the metamorphosis of Jupiter, our skill in the classics might have prevented our terror.

Clink. I glory in the fertility of my invention the more, that it is beyond the imagination of a Pagan deity. Besides, it is formed upon the *Vray-Semblance*; for I knew you had a Mummy and a Crocodile to be brought home.

Foff. Dr. Nautilus is an infirm, tender gentleman; I with the sudden concussion of his animal spirits may not

not kindle him into a fever. I myself, I must confess, have an extreme palpitation.

Clink. Dear uncle, be pacified! We are both of us the votaries of our great master *Apollo*. To *you* he has assigned the art of healing: *Me* he has taught to sing; why then should we jangle in our kindred faculties?

Foss. *Apollo*, for aught I know, may be a very fine person: but this I am sure of, that the skill he has given all his physicians is not sufficient to cure the madness of his poets.

Pof. Hark ye, brother *Fossile*! Your *Crocodile* has proved a human creature, I wish your wife may not prove a *Crocodile*.

Naut. Hark ye, brother *Fossile*! Your *Mummy*, as you were saying, seemeth to be hot in the first degree, and is powerful in some diseases of women.

[*Exeunt Nautilus and Possum.*]

Foss. You diabolical performers of my niece's *Masquerade*, will it please you to follow those gentlemen?

Clink. Nay, Sir, you shall see them dance first.

Foss. Dance! The devil! bring me hither a spit! a fire-fork! I'll try whether the monsters are impenetrable or not.

Plotaw. I hope, Sir, you will not expose us to the fury of the mob, since we came hither upon so courteous a design.

Foss. Good courteous, Mr. *Mummy*, without more ceremony, will it please you to retire to your subterraneous habitation? And you, Mr. *Crocodile*, go about your business this moment, or you shall change your *Nile* for the next horse-pond.

Clink. Spare my *Masqueraders*.

Under. Let it never be said that the famous Dr. *Fossile*, so renowned for his charity to monsters, should violate the laws of hospitality, and turn a poor *Alligator* naked into the street.

Foss. Deposit your *Exuviae* then, and assume your human shape.

Under.

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Foss. Deposit your *Exuviae* then, and assume your human shape.

Under.

56 THREE HOURS AFTER MARRIAGE.

Under. For that, I must beg your excuse. A gentleman would not chuse to be known in these frolics.

Foss. Then out of my doors! Here, footmen, out with him; out, thou hypocrite, of an *Alligator*.

[*Underplot is turned out.*

Sir, the respect I have for catacombs and pyramids, will not protect you. [*A noise of mob within.*

Enter Prue.

Prue. Sir! Sir! lock your doors, or else all your monsters will run home again to the *Indies*. Your *Crocodile* yonder has made his escape; if he gets but to *Somerſet Water-Gate*, he is gone for ever. [*Ex Prue.*

Enter a Footman.

Foss. The herb-woman swore she knew him to be the devil, for she had met him one dark night in *St. Sepulchre's church-yard*; then the monster called a coach, methought with the voice of a christian; but a sailor that came by said he might be a *Crocodile* for all that, for *Crocodiles* could cry like children, and was for killing him outright, saying they were good to eat in *Egypt*; but the constable cried, Take him alive, for what if he be an *Egyptian*, he is still the King's subject.

[*Ex. Footman. A noise of mob within.*

Enter Prue.

Prue. Then he was hurried away by the mob. A bull-dog ran away with six joints of his tail, and the claw of his near foot before: At last by good fortune, to save his life, he fell in with the *Hockley in the Hole* bull and bear; the master claimed him for his monster, and so he is now attended by a vast mob, very solemnly marching to *Hockley in the Hole*, with the bear in his front, the bull in his rear, and a monkey upon each shoulder.

Town. Mr. *Mummy*, you would do well to draw the curtains of your chair, or the mob's respect for the dead will scarce protect you.

[*Ex. Plotwell in a chair.*
Click.

Clink. My concern for him obliges me to go and see that he gets off safe, lest any farther mischief befall the persons of our masque. [Ex. Clinket.]

Foss. Sweetly, *Horace: Nunquam satis*, and so forth. A man can never be too cautious. Madam, sit down by me. Pray how long is it since you and I have been married?

Town. Near three hours, Sir.

Foss. And what anxieties has this time produced! The dangers of divorce! Calumnatory letters! Lewd fellows introduced by my niece! Groundless jealousies on both sides! Even thy virginity put to the touch-stone! But this last danger I plunged thee in myself; to leave thee in the room with two such robust young fellows.

Town. Ay, with two young fellows! but, my dear, I know you did it ignorantly,

Foss. This is the first blest minute of repose that I have enjoyed in matrimony. Dost thou know the reason, my dear, why I have chosen thee of all woman-kind?

Town. My face perhaps.

Foss. No.

Town. My wit?

Foss. No.

Town. My virtue and good humour?

Foss. No. But for the natural conformity of our constitutions. Because thou art hot and moist in the third degree, and I myself cold and dry in the first.

Town. And so Nature has coupled us like the elements.

Foss. Thou hast nothing to do but to submit thy constitution to my regimen.

Town. You shall find me obedient in all things.

Foss. It is strange, yet certain, that the intellects of the infant depend upon the suppers of the parents. Diet must be prescribed.

Town.

58 THREE HOURS AFTER MARRIAGE.

Town. So the wit of one's posterity is determined by the choice of one's cook.

Foss. Right. You may observe how *French* cooks, with their high *ragoûts* have contaminated our plain *English* understandings. Our supper to-night is extracted from the best authors. How delightful is this minute of tranquillity! my soul is at ease. How happy shalt thou make me! thou shalt bring me the finest boy! [*Knocking at the door.*] No mortal shall enter these doors this day. [*Knocking again*] Oh, it must be the news of poor Lady *Hippokekoana's* death. Poor woman! Such is the condition of life, some die, and some are born, and I shall now make some reparation for the mortality of my parents by the fecundity of my wife. My dear, thou shalt bring me the finest boy!

Enter Footman.

Footman. Sir, here's a seaman from *Deptford* must needs speak with you.

Foss. Let him come in. One of my retail *Indian* merchants, I suppose, that always brings me some odd things.

Enter Sailor with a child.

What hast thou brought me, friend, a young drill?

Sail. Look ye d'ye see, master, you know best whether a monkey begot him.

Foss. A mere human child!

Town. Thy carelessness, *Sarsnet*, has exposed me, I am lost and ruined. O Heaven! Heaven! Now impudence assist me. [*Aside.*]

Foss. Is the child monstrous? Or dost thou bring him hither to take physic?

Sail. I care not what he takes; so you take him.

Foss. What does the fellow mean?

Sail.

Sail. Fellow me no fellows! My name is *Jack Capstern* of *Deptford*: And are not you the man that has the raree-show of oyster-shells and pebble-stones?

Foss. What if I am?

Sail. Why, then my invoice is right, I must leave my cargo here.

Town. Miserable woman that I am! How shall I support this sight! Thy bastard brought into thy family as soon as thy bride!

Foss. Patience, patience, I beseech you. Indeed I have no posterity.

Town. You lascivious brute you.

Foss. Passion is but the tempestuous cloud that obscures reason; be calm, and I'll convince you. Friend, how came you to bring the infant hither?

Sail. My wife, poor woman, could give him suck no longer, for she died yesterday morning. There's a long account, Master. It was hard to trace him to the fountain-head, I steer'd my course from lane to lane, I spoke to twenty old women, and at last was directed to a ribband-shop in *Covent-Garden*, and they sent me hither, and so take the bantling and pay me his clearings.

[Offers him the child.

Foss. I shall find law for you, firrah. Within there!—Call my neighbour *Possum*, he is a Justice of Peace, as well as a Physician.

Town. Call the man back. If you have committed one folly, don't expose yourself by a second.

Sail. The gentlewoman says well. Come, master, we all know that there is no boarding a pretty wench, without charges one way or other; you are a Doctor, master, and have no Surgeon's bill to pay; and so can the better afford it.

Town. Rather than you should bring a scandal on your character, I will submit to be a kind mother-in-law.

Ente

Enter Justice Possum, and Clerk.

Foss. Mr. Justice *Possum*, for now I must so call you, not brother *Possum*; here is a troublesome fellow with a child, which he would leave in my house.

Poss. Another man's child? He cannot in law.

Foss. It seemeth to me to be a child unlawfully begotten.

Possum. A bastard! who does he lay it to?

Foss. To our family.

Possum. Your family, *quatenus* a family, being a body collective, cannot get a bastard. Is this child a bastard, honest friend?

Sail. I was neither by when his mother was stowed, nor when she was unladen; whether he belong to a fair trader, or be run goods, I cannot tell: In short, here I was sent, and here I will leave him.

Foss. Dost thou know his mother, friend?

Sail. I am no midwife, master; I did not see him born.

Poss. You had best put up this matter, Doctor. A man of your years, when he has been wanton, cannot be too cautious.

Foss. This is all from the purpose. I was married this morning at seven; let any man in the least acquainted with the powers of nature, judge whether that human creature could be conceived and brought to maturity in one forenoon.

Poss. This is but talk, Dr. *Fossile*. It is well for you, though I say it, that you have fallen into the hands of a person, who has studied the *Civil* and *Canon-law* in the point of bastardy. This child is either yours or not yours.

Foss. My child, Mr. Justice?

Poss. Look ye, Dr. *Fossil*, you confound filiation with legitimation. Lawyers are of opinion, that filiation is necessary to legitimation, but not *à contra*.

[*The child cries.*
Foss.

Foss. I would not starve any of my own species, get the infant some water-pap. But Mr. Justice——

Pos. The proofs, I say, Doctor, of filiation are five. Nomination enunciatively pronounced, strong presumptions, and circumstantial proofs——

Foss. What is all this to me? I tell you, I know nothing of the child.

Pos. Signs of paternal affection, similitude of features, and commerce with the mother. And first of the first, Nomination. Has the Doctor ever been heard to call the infant, son?

Town. He has call'd him child, since he came into this room. You have indeed, Mr. *Fossile*.

Pos. Bring hither the Doctor's great bible.——Let us examine in the blank leaf whether he be enrolled among the rest of his children.

Foss. I tell you, I never had any children. I shall grow distracted, I shall——

Pos. But did you give any orders against registering the child by the name of *Fossile*?

Foss. How was it possible!

Pos. Set down that, clerk. He did not prohibit the registering the child in his own name. We ourselves have observed one sign of fatherly tenderness. Clerk, set down the water-pap he ordered just now. Come we now——

Foss. What a jargon is this!

Pos. Come we now, I say, to that which the lawyers call *magnum naturæ argumentum*, similitude of features. Bring hither the child, friend; Dr. *Fossile* look upon me. The unequal circle of the infant's face, somewhat resembles the inequality of the circumference of your countenance; he has also the vituline or calf-like concavity of the profile of your visage.

Foss. Pish!

Pos. And he is somewhat beetle-browed, and his nose will rise with time to an equal prominence with the Doctor's.

Town. Indeed he has somewhat of your nose, Mr. *Foffle*.

Foff. Ridiculous!

Town. The child is comely.

Pos. Consider the large aperture of his mouth.

Sail. Nay, the tokens are plain enough. I have the fellow of him at home; but my wife told me two days ago, that this with the wall-eye, and splay-foot belonged to you, Sir.

[*Prue runs a-cross the stage with a letter, which Foffle snatches from her.*]

Fof. Whither are you going so fast, huffey? I will examine every thing within these walls. [*Ex. Prue.*] [*Reads.*] For *Richard Plotwell, Esq;* This letter unravels the whole affair: As she is an unfortunate relation of mine, I must beg you would act with discretion.

[*Gives Possum the letter.*]

Pos. Reads. "Sir, the child which you fathered is
" returned back upon my hands. Your *Drury-Lane*
" friends have treated me with such rudeness that they
" told me in plain terms I should be damn'd. How
" unfortunate soever my offspring is, I hope you at
" least will defend the reputation of the unhappy

Phæbe Clinket."

— As you say, Doctor, the case is but too plain; every circumstance hits.

Enter Clinket.

Clink. 'Tis very uncivil, Sir, to break open one's letters.

Foff. Would I had not; and that the contents of it had been a secret to me and all mankind for ever. Wretched creature! to what a miserable condition has thy poetry reduced thee!

Clink.

Clink. I am not in the least mortified with the accident. I know it has happened to many of the most famous daughters of *Apollo*; and to myself several times.

Foss. I am thunderstruck at her imprudence! Several times?

Clink. I have had one returned upon my hands every winter for these five years past. I may, perhaps, be excelled by others in judgement and correctness of manners, but for fertility and readiness of conception, I will yield to no-body.

Foss. Bless me! whence had she this luxuriant constitution!

Pof. Patience, Sir. Perhaps the Lady may be married.

Town. 'Tis infamous, Mr. *Fossile* to keep her in your house; yet though you turn her out of doors, use her with some humanity. I will take care of the child.

Clink. I can find no *denouement* of all this conversation. Where is the crime, I pray, of writing a Tragedy? I sent it to *Drury-Lane* house to be acted; and here it is returned by the wrong *gout* of the Actors.

Pof. This incident has somewhat embarrassed us. But what mean you here, Madam, by this expression? Your offspring.

Clink. My Tragedy, the offspring of my brain. One of his Majesty's Justices of the Peace, and not understand the use of the metaphor!

Pof. Doctor, you have used much artifice, and many demurrers; but the child must lie at your door at last. Friend, speak plain what thou knowest of this matter.

Foss. Let me relate my story. This morning, I married this Lady, and brought her from her lodgings, at Mrs. *Chambers's*, in *King-street, Covent-Garden*.

Sail. Mrs. *Chambers*! To that place I was directed, where lived the maid that put the bantling out to be nursed by my wife for her Lady; and who she was, 'tis none of our business to enquire.

Pof. Dost thou know the name of this maid?

Sail. Let me consider——*Lutestring.*——

Foss. *Sarjnet*, thou meanest.

Sail. *Sarjnet*! That's right.

Town. I'll turn her out of my house this moment. Filthy creature!

Foss. The evidence is plain. You have cohabitation with the mother, Doctor, *currat lex*. And you must keep the child.

Foss. Your decree is unjust, Sir, and I'll seek my remedy at law. As I never was espoused, I never had carnal knowledge of any woman; and my wife Mrs. *Susanna Townley*, is a pure virgin at this hour for me.

Pos. *Susanna Townley*! *Susanna Townley*! Look how runs the warrant you drew up this morning.

[*Clerk gives him a paper.*]

Madam, a word in private with you. [*Whispers her.*] Doctor, my Lord Chief Justice has some business with this Lady.

Foss. My Lord Chief Justice business with my wife!

Pos. To be plain with you, Doctor *Fossile*, you have for these three hours entertained another man's wife. Her husband, Lieutenant *Bengall*, is just returned from the *Indies*, and this morning took out a warrant from me for an elopement. It will be more for your credit to part with her privately, than suffer her publicly to be carried off by a Tipstaff.

Foss. Surprizing have been the events of this day; but this, the strangest of all, settles my future repose. Let her go—I have not dishonoured the bed of Lieutenant *Bengall*—Hark ye friend! Do you follow her with that badge of her infamy.

Pos. By your favour, Doctor, I never reverse my judgement. The child is yours: For it cannot belong to a man who has been three years absent in the *East Indies*. Leave the child.

Sail. I find you are out of humour, master. So I'll call to-morrow for his clearings.

[*Sailor lays down the child, and Exit with*
Possum, Clerk, and Townley. *Clink.*]

Clink. Uncle, by this day's adventure, every one has got something. Lieutenant *Bengall* has got his wife again; you a fine child; and I a plot for a Comedy; and I'll this moment set about it. [*Ex. Clinket.*]

Fossile. What must be, must be. [*Takes up the child.*]
Fossile thou didst want posterity: here behold thou hast it. A wife thou didst not want; thou hast none. But thou art caressing a child that is not thy own. What then? A thousand, and a thousand husbands are doing the same thing this very instant; and the knowledge of truth is desireable, and makes thy case the better. What signifies whether a man beget his child or not? How ridiculous is the act itself, said the great Emperor *Antoninus*! I now look upon myself as a *Roman* citizen. It is better that the father should adopt the child, than that the wife should adopt the father. [*Ex. Fossile.*]

EPILOGUE.



EPILOGUE.

SPOKEN by Mrs. OLDFIELD.

*THE ancient Epilogue, as Critics write,
Was "Clap your Hands, excuse us, and good-
night ;"*

*The modern always was a kind Essay
To reconcile the Audience to the Play :
More polish'd, we of late have learnt to fly
At Parties, Treaties, Nations, Ministry.
Our Author more genteelly leaves these Brawls
To Coffee-houses, and to Cobler's Stalls.
His very Monsters are of sweet Condition,
None but the Crocodile's a Politician ;
He reaps the blessings of his double Nature,
And, Trimmer like, can live on Land or Water :
Yet this same Monster should be kindly treated,
He lik'd a Lady's Flesh—but not to eat it.*

*As for my other Spark, my favourite Mummy,
His Feats were such, smart Youths ! as might become
ye ;*

*Dead as he seem'd he had sure Signs of Life ;
His Hieroglyphics pleas'd the Doctor's Wife.*

Whom

E P I L O G U E,

*Whom can our well-bred Poetess displease?
She wrote, like Quality—with wondrous ease:
All her Offence was harmless want of Wit;
Is that a Crime?—Ye Powers preserve the Pit!*

*My Doctor too, to give the Dev'l his due,
When ev'ry creature did his Spouse pursue,
(Men sound and living, bury'd Flesh, dry'd Fish)
Was ev'n as civil as a Wife could wish.*

*Yet he was somewhat saucy with his Phial;
What! Put young Maids to that unnat'ral Trial!
So hard a Test! Why, if you needs will make it,
Faith, let us marry first—and then we'll take it.*

*Who could be angry though like Fossile teaz'd?
Consider, in three Hours the Man was eas'd.
How many of you are for Life beguil'd,
And keep as well the Mother, as the Child!
None but a Tar could be so tender-hearted,
To claim a Wife that had been three Years parted;
Would you do this, my Friends?—Believe me, never;
When modishly you part—you part for ever.*

*Join then your Voices! Be the Play excus'd
For once, though no one living is abus'd;
To that bright Circle which commands our Duties,
To you superior Eighteen-penny Beauties,
To the lac'd Hat and Cockade of the Pit,
To All, in one Word, we our Cause submit,
Who think good breeding is a-kin to Wit.*

T H E

THE HISTORY OF

THE CITY OF

NEW YORK

FROM THE FIRST SETTLEMENT

TO THE PRESENT TIME

BY

J. C. CALVERT

ESQ.

OF THE

BAR AT NEW YORK

AND

OF THE

COURT OF COMMONS

IN GREAT BRITAIN

AND

OF THE

HOUSE OF COMMONS

IN GREAT BRITAIN

AND

OF THE

HOUSE OF COMMONS

IN GREAT BRITAIN

AND

OF THE

HOUSE OF COMMONS

T H E
M O H O C K S:

A
TRAGI-COMICAL FARCE.

As it was Acted near the
Watch-House in COVENT-GARDEN,

By Her MAJESTY'S SERVANTS.

*Quo, quo, scelesti, ruitis? aut cur dexteris
Aptantur enses conditi?*

HOR.



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To Mr. D***.

SIR,

THERE are several Reasons which induce me to lay this Work at your Feet: The subject of it is *Horrid* and *Tremendous*, and the whole Piece written according to the exactest Rules of Dramatic Poetry, as I have with great care collected them from several of your elaborate Dissertations.

The World will easily perceive that the Plot of it is form'd upon that of *Appius* and *Virginia*, which Model, indeed, I have in a great measure followed throughout the whole Conduct of the Play.

The Action is plain and simple, the Time not above an hour and three quarters, and the Scene shifted but twice in the whole *Drama*: I am apt to flatter myself that those two Transitions are extremely natural and easy; being only out of the Tavern into the Watch-house, and, *vice versa*, out of the Watch-house into the Tavern.

I am

DEDICATION.

I am informed that several of these Scenes have already received your Approbation, in your elegant Retreat in the Country; where, I have the Pleasure to learn, that you are laying out your Time in such Rhapsodies and Speculations as cannot but be beneficial to the Commonwealth of Letters.

As we look upon you to have the Monopoly of *English Criticism* in your Head, we hope you will very shortly chastise the Insolence of the *Spectator*, who has lately had the *Audaciousness* to shew that there are more Beauties than Faults in a Modern Writer.

I am not at all concerned at this *Tragedy's* being rejected by the Players, when I consider how many of your immortal Compositions have met with no better Reception.

I am proud to answer the malicious World in this Case, with that memorable Saying which was formerly applied to *Scaliger*:—*I had rather be in the Wrong with the ingenious Mr, D***, than in the Right with any body else.*

I am, Sir, with great Respect and Gratitude,

Your most obliged,

most obedient,

most humble,

and most devoted Servant,

THE AUTHOR.



T H E
P R O L O G U E.

To be SPOKEN by the PUBLISHER.

*THIS Farce, if the kind Players had thought fit,
 With Action had supply'd its want of Wit.
 Oh Readers! had you seen the Mohocks rage,
 And frighted Watchmen tremble on the Stage;
 Had you but seen our Mighty Emp'ror stalk;
 And heard, in Cloudy, honest Dicky talk,
 Seen Pinkethman in strutting Prig appear,
 And, 'midst of Danger, wisely lead the Rear,
 It might have pleas'd; for now-a-days the Joke
 Rises or falls as with Grimace 'tis spoke.
 As matters stand, there's but this only way,
 T' applaud our disappointed Author's Play:
 Let all those Hands that would have clapp'd, combine
 To take the whole Impression off from mine.
 That's a sure way to raise the Poet's Name:
 A New Edition gains immortal Fame!*

Vol. III.

H

Dramatis

Dramatis Personæ.

The Emperor of the *Mohocks*.

Abaddon,

Molock

Whisker,

Myrmidon,

Cannibal,

Gogmagog,

Constable Prig.

Peter Cloudy,

Starlight,

Frost,

Windy,

Moonshine,

Bleak,

} *Mohocks*.

} *Watchmen*.

Gentle, a *Beau*.

Joan Cloudy, Cloudy's *Wife*.

Justice Wiseman.

Justice Kindle.

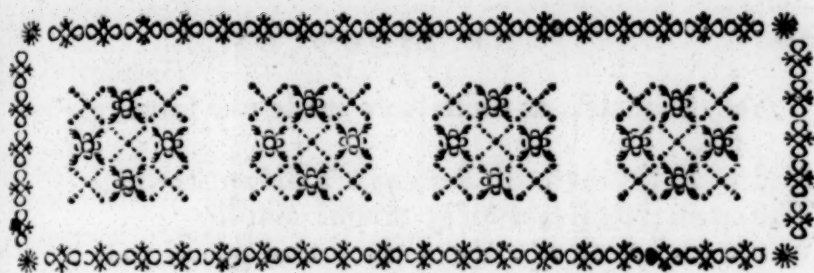
Justice Scruple.

Peg Firebrand,

Jenny Cracker,

} *Whores*.

Other Watchmen.



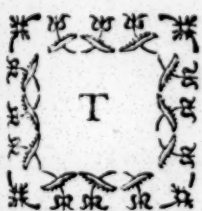
T H E
M O H O C K S.*
A
TRAGI-COMICAL FARCE.



S C E N E I. A TAVERN.

The EMPEROR of the MOHOCKS sitting in State,
MOHOCKS attending him.

ABADDON.



H U S far our riots with success are
crown'd,
Have found no stop, or what they found
o'ercame;
In vain th' embatteli'd Watch in deep
array,

Against our rage oppose their lifted poles;
Through Poles we rush triumphant, watchman rolls
On watchman; while their lanthorns kick'd aloft
Like blazing stars, illumine all the air.

H 2

Mel.

* For further particulars of the Mohocks, see the Spectators, &c.

Mol. Such acts as these have made our fame immortal,
 And wide through all *Britannia's* distant towns,
 The name of *Mohock* ev'ry tongue employs ;
 While each fond mother at the sound grows pale
 And trembles for her absent son——

Whisk. Let's lose no longer time in idle talk,
 Which might be better spent in new exploits.——
 Most mighty emperor ! a noble youth,
 Fir'd by our deeds to glorious emulation
 Desires admittance——

Emp. Go, and introduce him :
 But search with care th' intentions of his heart,
 See he be not a superficial sinner,
 That talks of mischiefs which he ne'er perform'd :
 Those are mean villains, and unworthy us.

Mir. I'll answer for him, for I've known him long,
 Know him a subject worthy such a prince ;
 Sashes and casements felt his early rage,
 He has twisted knockers, broken drawers heads,
 And never flinch'd his glass, or baulk'd his wench.
 But see he comes——

Enter New Mohock.

New Moh. Great potentate ! who leadst the *Mohock*
 squadrons
 To nightly expeditions, whose dread nod
 Gives law to those, lawless to all besides :
 'To thee I come——to serve beneath thy banner.
 Mischief has long lain dormant in my bosom
 Like smother'd fire, which now shall blaze abroad
 In glorious enterprize——

Emp. Bravely resolv'd——henceforth thy name
 Be *Cannibal*——like them, devour mankind.
 But come——night wears apace——begin the rites.
 [They all take hands in a circle and kneel.

Gog.

Gog. By all the elements, and all the powers
Celestial, nay terrestrial, and infernal ;
By *Acheron*, and the black streams of *Styx*,
An oath irrevocable to *Jove* himself,
We swear true fealty, and firm allegiance
To our most high and mighty emperor.

All. We swear.

Gog. That we'll to virtue bear invet'rate hate,
Renounce humanity, defy religion ;
That villany, and all outrageous crimes
Shall ever be our glory and our pleasure.

All. We swear.

Gog. Let all hell's curses light upon his head,
That dares to violate this solemn oath ;
May pains and aches cramp all his rotten bones ;
May constant impotence attend his lust ;
May the dull slave be bigotted to virtue ;
And tread no more the pleasing paths of vice,
And then, at last die a mean, whining penitent.

All. This curse involve us all.

Emp. 'Tis well—[*The Emperor stands in the midst of
them, and speaks this Speech.*

Now bring the generous bowl—come—pledge me all—
Rouse up your souls with this celestial nectar.

What gain'd the *Macedonian* youth the world ?

'Twas wine. What rais'd the soul of *Catiline*

To such a brave, unparallel'd ambition ?

Wine, potent, heav'nly juice, immortal wine.

Slothful a-while inglorious mortals lay,

But wine to noble actions led the way ;

Wine conquers all things—all must wine obey.

[*Drinks*]

A S O N G.

[*The Mohocks stand in a Circle, with the Glasses
in their Hands.*

Come, fill up the glass !

Round, round, let it pass,

H 3

'Till

'Till our reason be lost in our wine :
 Leave conscience's rules
 To women and fools,
 THIS only can make us divine.

Chorus. Then a *Mohock*, a *Mohock* I'll be,
 No laws shall restrain
 Our libertine reign,
 We'll riot, drink on, and be free. [*All drink.*

We will scour the town,
 Knock the constable down,
 Put the watch and the beadle to flight :
 We'll force all we meet
 To kneel down at our feet,
 And own this great prince of the night.

Chor. Then a *Mohock*, a *Mohock*, &c. [*All drink.*

The Grand Seignior shall own
 His seraglio outdone,
 For all womankind is our booty ;
 No condition we spare
 Be they brown, black or fair
 We make them fall down, and do duty.

Chorus. Then a *Mohock*, a *Mohock* I'll be,
 No laws shall restrain
 Our libertine reign
 We'll riot, drink on, and be free. [*All drink.*
 [*Exeunt.*

S C E N E II.

The Street before the Watch-House.

Enter several Watchmen.

Mock. Lookye, brother watchman, you are a man of
 earning and can read the news.

Windy.

Windy. Why, neighbour, for that matter as a body may say, Mr. Constable is a great man! a great man, neighbour, and fair words cost nothing——But as I was saying, *Peter Cloudy* there, is ready with his verses.

Frost. Ay, ay! *Peter's* verses may be seen pasted up in every barber's shop in the parish; *Peter* shall be our spokesman to induce our new Mr. Constable.

Enter Constable.

Come *Cloudy*, begin.

Cloudy. O Magistrate, thou art, as I may say,
So great by night, as is Queen *Anne* by day,
And what greater power can any where be seen?
For you do represent the person of the Queen.
The greatest Judge in *England* cannot do,
Or execute more greater things than you.
God save you, Master Constable, we pray,
Who are your honest Watch-men night and day.

Const. Well said, *Peter*——but harkye, my lads,
we are like to have hot work on't to-night——the
Mohocks, without doubt, will be abroad.

Starl. Oh, master constable, bloody-minded fellows!
that have broke more windows than the great storm,
and are more mischievous than a press-gang.

Cloudy. You may take my word for it, Mr. Constable
——sufferers may have leave to complain——my head
and ribs have been thwack'd over and over again like
a flock-bed by them.

Const. Why, they say that they slit noses, cut and
flash all they meet with, poach folks in the calves of
the legs, and disturb us and our officers in our lawful
authority——I charge you all, knock down upon sus-
picion——that we may not be forced to cut capers
against our wills——Pox of such dancing masters, say
I, that will make a man dance without a fiddle!

Starl.

Starl. They make no more of our poles than so many straws. Let me tell, you, Sir, that I have seen them do such things as would make a man's hair stand on end——let me see——ay——to-morrow night, 'twill be three nights ago——when I was going my round——I met about five or six and thirty of these *Mohocks*; by the same token 'twas a very windy morning——they all had swords as broad as butchers clevers, and hack'd and hew'd down all before them——I saw——as I am a man of credit, in the neighbourhood——all the ground covered with noses——as thick as 'tis with hail-stones after a storm.

Const. So——between whores and *Mohocks*, we shall not have a man left with a handle to his face—heav'n keep us, say I,——and preserve that member from danger—for a man of reputation would never be able to shew his nose after such an affront.

Frost. Ha, ha, ha!——But that is nothing to what I have seen——I saw them hook a man as cleverly as a fisherman would a great fish——and play him up and down from *Charing-Cross* to *Temple-Bar*——they cut off his ears, and eat them up, and then gave him a swinging slash in the arm——told him that bleeding was good for a fright, and so turn'd him loose.

Const. And where were you all the while?

Frost. I blowed out my candle, and lay snug in the corner of a bulk.

Starl. Poh——poh!——that's nothing at all——I saw them cut off a fellow's legs, and if the poor man had not run hard for it, they had cut off his head into the bargain.

Cloudy. Poor *John Mopstaff's* wife was likely to come to damage by them——for they took her up by the heels and turned her quite inside out——the poor woman, they say, will ne'er be good for any thing more——honest *John* can hardly find the head from the tail of her.

Windy.

Windy. Hark! hark! what noise is that?—oh the *Mohocks*——the *Mohocks*——oh——*Will, Harry, Gregory, Peter, George, Thomas,* to your poles——quickly——ay——there——stand to it——stand to it. [*Pushing them forwards.*]

Const. Where?——where are they?——ay, gentlemen——stand to it. [*Pushing them forwards.*]

Starl. Oh——there they come——oh——yonder is one with a face like a lion——the *Guild-hall Giant* is a meer Dwarf to him.

Cloudy. Where, where?——Oh!——keep your ranks, brothers——hark!

Starl. Nothing but fancy, neighbours, all's well, only a shadow, only a shadow; but if they had come---

All. Ay, if they had come——

[*All with their poles lifted up and advancing.*]

Bleak. We would have——hark——keep your ranks, *Peter,*——stand to them, boys. [*Pushing 'em.*]
Nothing, nothing, neighbours.

Cloudy. I'm afraid these plaguy suspexions are fore-runners of them; but if they had come——

Const. Open thy lanthorn, *Peter.*

[*The Constable speaks, lighting his Pipe.*]

The *Mohocks*——are but men——and——we be men as well as they be——and——a man——is a man, neighbours——now——you be the watch——and I——am the Constable——they may——may-hap——venture upon a single straggling watchman——but we——are a garrison——a garrison, brothers.

Bleak. Ay, Mr. Constable, and we'll stand by you with our lives and fortunes.

Const. A *Mohock*,—brothers,—a *Mohock*, I say, will will no more come near a watch-house than a whore——Here—we are unattackable—but we be—not only to be upon the defensive—brothers—I mean, to defend the watch-house—but upon the offensive——I mean, to offend——destroy——knock down

down——take up——and——commit
 ——and bring *Mohocks* to justice.——There-
 fore, neighbours,——as our duty requires us
 ——I order the greatest party of you to go——
 through all the several——streets——lanes and alleys
 ——to endeavour——to seize——and apprehend the
Mohocks——if you apprehend them——d'ye hear—
 bring them hither before me——But if——they appre-
 hend you——d'ye hear——then——you need not
 come——The Justices are now sitting—and have ordered
 all the *Mohocks* that we shall take, to be immediately
 brought before them. [*They all go out, but the Con-*
stable and six Watchmen.]

Cloudy. Mr. Constable—d'ye see, Mr. Constable,
 here is this pole, Mr. Constable—I'll engage that this
 pole—Mr. Constable, if it takes a *Mohock* in the right
 place—it shall knock him down as flat as a flounder,
 Mr. Constable—*Pole* is the word, Sir,—I, one night,
 Mr. Constable, clapped my back against the Watch-
 house, and kept nine *Mohocks*, with their swords
 drawn, at pole's length, broke three of their heads,
 knock'd down four, and trimmed the jackets of the
 other six.

Bleak. I, for my part, remember the ancient *Mo-*
hocks of King *Charles's* days; I was but a young man
 then; now times are altered with me——some of
 the greatest men of the kingdom were *Mohocks*, yet
 for all that we did not care a fig for them.

Const. There have been *Mohocks* in all reigns and
 in all ages, but, thank Heaven, there have been Con-
 stables too, with heart and hand to suppress them——
 though a Constable be a civil magistrate, yet upon
 great occasions he is allowed to take up arms; and
 there is not a man among you that shall step a step
 farther than myself. [*A Noise of the Mohocks.*]

Windy. Mr. Constable stands in the front.

[*Pushing one another forwards.*]

Frost. A brave man! A gallant man! I warrant
 him. *Const.*

Const. Hold, hold, Gentlemen, let us do all things in order.—Do you advance, Gentlemen, d'ye see, and while you advance I'll lead up the rear.

Enter the Mohocks singing.

'Tis wine and a whore,
That we *Mohocks* adore,
We'll drink 'till our senses we quench;
When the liquor is in,
We're heightened for sin;
Then heigh! for a brisk jolly wench.
Fa, la, la, la.

Abad. Holla! the watch! Down—down with them; oh, the devil!—down with your poles you dogs—upon your knees—worship the *Mohocks* and be damned to you [*The Watch throw down their poles, and fall on their knees.*]

Starl. Oh for pity's sake, Gentlemen, I've a wife and four children.

Mol. Rot your wife and children! Make fricassees of them, Sirrah, and invite the devil to supper.

Whisk. And I'll cut off the noses of all these rascals to garnish the dish.

Myrm. Heighday!—what, *Peg Firebrand* in limbo? [*Looking towards two wenches whom the watch have in custody.*]

Gog. Come, you scoundrel there—unhand the doxies—Upon your knees, you dog, and receive sentence.

Peg. Your humble servant, Mr. *Myrmidon*.

Jenny. Who thought to have found Mr. *Gogmagog* here!

Peg. Pox of these destroyers of game!—and Mr. *Moloch* too! Mr. *Moloch*, I am your humble servant.

Can. Come, I'll sacrifice this rascal's ears to you,
Peg.

Emp.

Emp. The Constable is my prisoner——harkye, firrah, are you married?

Const. Yes, an' please your honour.

Emp. Then you are a cuckold, coxcomb.

Const. Yes——an——an——an——please——your worship. *[Trembling for fear.]*

Abad. This dog's face is scarce worth the spoiling. Come, firrah, I'll save your wife the charge of more children, and make you cry a dark cloudy morning like an *Italian*.

Cloudy. Oh pray your honour, good your honour, my ears or my nose are wholly at your worship's service; but pray, good, dear loving Sir, don't let poor *Gillian* lose her only comfort.

Mol. Come, let's dispatch, cut, slash, and mangle and pursue more noble game.

Emp. Hold, hold! For once we'll have a merry frolic. Since we have the Constable and watch in our power, we will divest ourself of our imperial dignity, make them *Mohocks*, and ourselves Constable and watchmen.

All. Agreed, agreed!—Come strip, firrah, strip firrah.

Emp. Ay, ay, come, come, firrah, let us put the lion's skin upon the asfs.

Const. Yes, Sir, yes; oh pray, Sir! I'll be an asf or any thing——but pray your honour let me be an asf with ears.

Starl. Little does my poor wife at home think what a pityful taking her husband is in.——Poor soul!——She is found asleep——and thinks nought of all this. *[Aside.]*

[The Emperor changes cloaths with the Constable, and places a patch like an half Moon in his forehead; the other Mohocks strip the Watchmen, and take their poles and lanthorns.]

Myrm. Come, strip this scoundrel, *Jenny*, and plague the rogue now thou hast got him in thy power.

Jenny. Pox on't! Mr. *Myrmidon*——'tis as dangerous

dangerous for us to use a watchman ill, as for a stage-coachman to be uncivil to an highwayman; for our trade forces us to travel the streets all the year round.
 ———Remember, firrah, you owe me an escape without a fee to the Constable.

Peg. And me.

Whisk. Why, the dog looks as terrible as a Janizary.

Cloudy. Oh law! Sir, I'm a poor quiet harmless fellow, and no Janzary———*Peter Cloudy* by name.

———I'm known all the neighbourhood over, and can bring several good creditable housekeepers to vouch for my honesty.

Can. The next man that speaks a word forfeits an ear; and for the second fault, a nose———

Cloudy. Let me see! oh, ay, I was afraid he had took him off as a mountebank draws a tooth---with a touch.

[*Feeling his Nose. Aside.*]

Can. Silence in the court!———while our most mighty Emperor sits in judgment.

Emp. You *Cannibal*, you *Abaddon*, with *Whisker* and the rest of you, bring all you meet before me.

Enter Gentle.

Mol. Heigh-day! here's a fellow got into the tram-mels already. Come, you Sir, before the Constable:
 ———on, on.

[*They seize Gentle.*]

Gent. Pray, gentlemen, treat a man of fashion with more civility.

Can. Damme Sir!———you are a *Mohock*.

Gent. I vow and protest, gentlemen, I just now came from my lady *Pride's* in the city, from playing at ombre, and had there been a coach or chair to be found, I had not walked on foot.

Abad. Before the Constable———Come, come, before the Constable.

Gent. Be civil, I beg you, gentlemen, disengage your poles from my full bottom——and I'll wait upon you.

Emp. Harkye, fellow, you seem very suspicious, you have a downcast, hanging look.

Gent. A languishing air, you mean, Sir.

Emp. Give an account of yourself, fellow, whence come you? whither are you going? What is your business abroad at this time of night——take his sword from him there, lest he should have some evil design against the Queen's officer.

Gent. I am a gentleman, Sir.

Emp. A doubtful, a shuffling answer! we need no farther proof that he is a *Mohock*——commit him.

Gent. 'Tis a strange thing that the vulgar cannot distinguish the Gentleman——Pray Sir, may I ask you one question——have you ever seen a *Mohock*? Has he that softness in his look? That sweetness of delivery in his discourse? Believe me, Sir, there is a certain *Je ne sçai quoi* in my manner that shews my conversation to have lain altogether among the politer part of the world.

Emp. Lookye, Sir, your manners in talking *Latin* before her majesty's officer, shew you to be an ill-designing person.

Gent. Ha! ha! ha! very merry, as I hope to be caressed. *Latin* and *French* sound alike in the ears of the vulgar——*Je ne sçai quoi* is a *French* phrase much in vogue at the court end of the town. Ha! ha! ha!

Emp. Mere prevarication! To the round-house with him——A *Mohock* without dispute——here's evidence against you, friend, downright evidence against you.

Mol. With these very eyes, Mr. Constable, I saw him in a dark alley, where one could not see one's hand, slit a cinder wench's nose, because she would not yield to his brutality.

Gent. Is there any thing in my appearance that shows a *gout* for a cinder wench? Improbable! downright
right

right falsity!—This usage, Sir, will make me complain to some higher power of your illegal proceedings.

Emp. What! dispute my authority! Bind him, and see you guard him strictly.

Gent. Pray — Gentlemen — indeed — I vow — Gentlemen — you daub my ruffles; let not your lanthorns come nigh my cloaths — bless me! My perriwig! — hold! hold! I vow and protest upon the word of a gentleman, that I am a civil person — fogh! the stench of the lanthorns confounds me. — Have a care what you do Mr. Constable, for I shall find redress.

Emp. Bind him! bind him! I value not his threats. *Mohocks* are thus to be treated, where and whenever they shall be taken.

[*They bind Gentle.*]

Enter Joan Cloudy.

Geg. Come on, woman, before the Constable— Here is a straggler that is just now fallen into my hands, Mr. Constable.

Joan. Where is *Peter*? — What, is *Peter* going his rounds? I'm *Peter's* wife, Mr. Constable, — an' please your worship — and am come to take a pot with him, and take care of him this cold weather. What, is not *Peter* among you? What! is not *Peter* come back from his rounds? — *Peter*, Mr. Constable, an' please your worship, is a diligent man in his office — I have been in bed these two hours, and was so strangely a-dreamed of the *Mohocks* that I could not rest, but must come and see him. — Alas! alas! These are strange hazardous times! I was a-dreamed methought that the *Mohocks* —

Emp. Hold! hold! Woman, are you drunk with mild, stale, or stout?

Cloudy. Heaven grant that I may not be made a cuckold before my own face. — What a plague made her stirring?

[*Aside.*
Joan

Joan. Drunk! Mr. Constable, drunk! Whether you know it or not; though I am a poor woman, I am a sober woman——I work for what I get, and I thank no body for a maintenance.——Drunk! Tell your wife of being drunk with mild, stale, and stout——would *Peter* was here, he should not hear his wife affronted after this manner.

Emp. I'll take care and tongue-tie you, woman.

Joan. To be tongue-tied is fit for nothing but liars and swearers. I'll speak the truth, and shame the devil. Tho' a Constable be to keep peace and quietness, yet the greatest Constable in *England* shall not make me hold my tongue, when there is occasion for speaking. My husband is a Watchman, *Peter Cloudy* by name, a good house-keeper, though he be a poor man.——Why these are all strange faces, methinks. Where is *Peter*, friend? Oh law! oh dear! this ugly dream runs in my head most strangely?——[*Spies Peter.*] Oh gracious! What's this our *Peter*? Why *Peter*!——Sure I be'nt out of my dream yet!——Why, *Peter*! I say, *Peter*. [*Bawls. Cloudy shakes his head.*]

Gog. Ay, why there now, good woman, while you thought he was upon the watch, he was about *Mohocking*.——Why he is a *Mohock*, good woman.

Joan. Oh good lord!

Whisk. Here——we took him in company with these two wenches.

Joan. What? and Constable *Prig* a *Mohock* too! and honest *Harry Starlight*!

Can. *Mohocks* all, good woman, every soul of them.

Joan. Why *Peter*, *Peter*! Mr. *Prig*, *Harry Starlight*! What are you all dumb? [*Cloudy shakes his head.*] Oh, you ungracious rogue! You ungodly wretch! What, must you have your wenches, Sirrah, while your poor children at home?——Ay, and your poor wife, nay, your honest, true and careful wife, are ready to starve. Why, *Peter*, I say, fye upon't!

What

What, hadst thee no more wit than to be a *Mohock* too?
[Cloudy shakes his head.]

Joan. Why! you notorious rogue, won't you answer your wife?
[Cloudy shakes his head.]

Joan. Alack, alack! do I live to see this with my own eyes? Oh, *Peter, Peter!* an old fool of all fools is the worst—a *Hawkubite!* a rogue! I hope I shall see thee at the gallows for this, blockhead! What, you there, with your hairy bush upon your head, I suppose are the ring-leader of them:—I'll *Hawkubite* you, Sirrah.
[To Gentle.]

Gent. I vow and protest, Madam, you do me the greatest injustice in the world, I am a gentleman of honour, but at present labour under the misfortune of being suspected.

Emp. Come, come, woman, don't be troublesome, we can see through your designs; you are a female *Mohock*, I perceive—and under that denomination I order you to be apprehended.

Joan. I a female *Mohock!* a female Jesuit as soon—

Emp. Bind her, bind her.

Joan. But my tongue shall still be at liberty; he must have good luck, i'fackins that ties a woman's tongue. Why, *Peter, Sirrah*, all this comes of your ungracious tricks, you *Hawkubite* rogue!

Emp. Hey-day! what's here—[Takes a paper out of the Constable's pocket.] A warrant for the apprehending us *Mohocks!* I find the Justices are sitting in all the several quarters of the town this night, to examine them. What think you, my heroes?—shall we improve the jest? carry the scoundrels before some Justices of a ward where they are unknown, and so make them commit their own officers instead of us?

All. A merry frolic! With all our hearts.

Emp. We'll immediately carry them before the Justices of the next ward, commit the rascals to the round-house, and so finish the night's adventure.

Whif. Come, come! To the Justices—To the Justices!

Emp. Leave this fellow, and this female *Mohock* till our return; bind them back to back, and there will be no fear of *Peter's* being jealous. [*They bind them.*

Gent. I beg you, gentlemen! — This posture is so like man and wife, that a man of mode may be perfectly ashamed of it.

Joan. Go, you *Hawkubite* rogue, you ungracious wretch!

Gent. Figurative matrimony, as I hope to be carested; one pulls one way, and the other the other.

[*They bolt Gentle and Joan into the Watch-house and*
Exeunt.

SCENE III. A TAVERN.

The Justices sitting.

Scrup. What says the Statute Book, brother *Wife-man*, in relation to these kind of enormities? I am informed that there were *Mohocks* in Queen *Elizabeth's* days. Have you searched all the statutes of her reign for an Act in relation to this affair?

Kind. What occasion for all these doubts, Mr. Justice *Scruple*? for where the law is silent, there, our will is the law——If we have no precedents of *Mohocks*——come, Mr. Justice *Scruple*, my hearty service to you——if we have no precedents, I say, of any *Mohocks*——my hearty service to you again, Mr. Justice——yet *Mohocks* inclusively are comprehended in disorderly persons, and disturbers of her Majesty's peace, and as such, I say, they may and ought to be committed.

Scrup. But we must refer to the Statute-Books upon all occasions——The Statute-Books must be our guide in all cases——and where the statutes will not come within our cases——we must make our cases
come

come within the statute's cases——That's the method of all judicious practising Lawyers, brothers.

Wife. Let us act justice, and be guided by reason.

Kind. What has reason to do with law, brother *Wiseman*? If we follow the law, we must judge according to the letter of the law.

Scrup. You are in the right, brother *Kindle*——reason and law have been at variance in our courts these many years——a mis-spell'd word, or a quibble will baffle the most convincing argument in the world; and therefore if we are guided——Mr. Justice *Wiseman*, my hearty respects to you——if we are guided, I say, in any measure by the law, 'tis my opinion, that we must keep strictly to the letter of the law.

Enter the Mohocks, Constable and Watchmen.

Emp. An' please your worships we have brought some *Mohocks* before your honours; this, an please your honours, is the Emperor, and this his Grand Vizir, and all the rest are Princes of the blood.

Abad. I, my own self, an' please your honours, saw this very self-same fellow here, tip the lion upon five several of her Majesty's true-born subjects, and afterwards slit all their noses.

Mol. This fellow here—is a Dancing-master—an' please your worships, he pricks passengers in the calves of the legs to make them shew their agility.

Whisk. And this terrible-look'd fellow, an' please your honours, is their master cooper,——his office is to barrel up old women——all the rest of them have their proper employments.

Wife. Where, and how were they taken?

Can. In an attack upon the Watch-house——After an obstinate fight of about an hour and an half we made them all prisoners.

Star. The devil is a most confounded liar! [*Aside.*
Emp.

Emp. We took this *Mohock*, Mr. Justices in an actual assault to ravish these two women——oh—— he's a devilish fellow for a wench——the rogue has no conscience with him——no more conscience than a woman——What two women! why a woman with common modesty in her demands would not have desired above two men——what, two women at once!

Peg. He gagg'd me, and please your worships; then drew his sword, and threatened to kill me, if I did not——

Jen. And if the watchman had not come just in the nick——

Cloudy. If I lose both my tongue and my ears—— I must and will speak——An' please your worships, I am an honest Watchman——*Peter Cloudy.*——

Whisk. What are you, firrah?——what are you—— say a word more!—— [Aside to him.

[The Mohocks prick Cloudy behind.

Cloudy. I am——oh——yes——I am—— oh——I am a *Mohock*, an' please your worships—— a Watchman I mean——and this is Mr. Constable *Prig*——oh no——I beg your worships pardon, he is——oh no——oh no——he is not——

Gog. Come, come, confess—— [Aside to Cloudy.

Cloudy. Yes, he is——Emperor of the *Mohocks*, an' please ye——

Kind. I perceive that you are a prevaricating, shuffling rogue.——Commit him, commit him——when a man talks backwards and forwards——I have done with him.

Cloudy. Oh, dear Mr. Justice——indeed—— oh pray sweet, loving, good, kind Mr. Justice——I have been a watchman, these twenty years.

Mol. What's that you say, rascal? [Aside to Cloudy.

Cloudy. A *Mohock* these twenty years, an' please your honours.

Kind.

Kind. Commit them———commit them———
we need no further proof———impudent———
impudent———rogue———pretend to be the
Queen's Officer! I'll hear no more———away———
away with them.

Scrup. But hold, brother *Kindle*———Though the
case is plain in relation to this fellow———yet we
must not punish the guilty with the innocent———

Kind. The innocent with the guilty, you would say,
brother———They are all of a gang———all rogues
alike———Away———away with them.

Wife. Do you confess what is alledged against you
by these honest Watchmen. Friends? You are accused
of being a riotous sort of creatures called *Mohocks*———
Answer to your charge———are you guilty or not
guilty——— [*The Mohocks prick them behind.*]

All. Not guilty———an' please your worship———
Oh yes, yes———guilty———guilty———guilty.

Kind. What need we examine further?

Cloudy. But as to the ravishing———Mr. Justices———
oh me!———Yes I will speak [*Aside to the Mohocks.*]
as I was saying, Mr. Justices, as to the ravishing———
I know nothing of that matter———oh, oh! yes, yes
———I did ravish———I did ravish them———
an' please your worships.

Kind. A most impudent rogue———the fellow
has a confounded ravishing look———Heaven pre-
serve our wives and daughters!———Away, away———
they are dangerous persons———Commit them.

[*As they are carrying them out, Enter the other party of
the watch———with Joan Cloudy and beau Gentle.*]

1st Watch. An' please your worships———we found
this gentleman here, and woman here, joined together
in a very odd posture.

Kind. As how———Friend, as how?

1st Watch.

1st Watch. Why they were tied together——back to back——an please your worships.

Wife. A very odd posture——brother *Scruple*——a very odd posture.

Joan. But Mr. Justices——Oh you ungracious wretch! Mr. Justices——you are Justices of the Peace, and I hope your worshipful honours will do me justice——Look, how the sneaking rogue looks upon me now!

Scrup. Proceed woman, to the matter in hand.

Joan. Why, an' please your worshipful honours, to make short of my story——This great boobily lubber here——it seems, while I thought he was upon the watch, went about *Mohocking*——The Laird keep us, say I, from the Great *Turk*, and from popery! but to make short of my story, Mr. Justices,——this slave here, this *Hawkbite* rogue, throws away upon two wenches in one night, [*Weeping.*] what with good housewifry would have satisfied his poor wife for a fortnight; can you deny this, sirrah, can you deny it?——but to make short of my story, an' please your worshipful honours; when I came to the watch-house, thinking to find him in his office, I found him [*Weeping.*] taken up for a *Mohock*.

Emp. Faith, 'tis high time for us to sneak off. [*Aside.*
[*The Mohocks are going.*

Wife. Hold——hold!——let us examine farther into these affairs.

2d Watch. Why, *Harry*——how comest thee in this pickle? [*Aside to Starlight.*

Gent. These, gentlemen, Sirs, treat all alike without the least distinction——one would rather fall into the hands of the *Mohocks*, than suffer the barbarities of these ill bred sort of creatures.

Cloudy. Why they are all *Mohocks*——an' please your worshipful honours.——They unconstabled the Constable.

Star.

Star. And unwatched the watch——an' please your honours.

Cloudy. Ay——faith——I don't value your staring——it shall all out——faith——now I have got all my friends about me. [*Aside to the Mohocks.*] They stripped us——an please your worshipful honours——made us *Mohocks*, and themselves Constable and Watch.

Kind. Very strange——brother *Scruple*——very strange.

Cloudy This is Mr. Constable *Prig*, an' please your honours.

Star. And I am *Harry Starlight*, an' please ye.

Joan. And is not my *Peter* a *Mohock* then!——
Art not thee a *Hawkubite*, *Peter*?——are not these thy wenches?——oh, *Peter*! [*Hugging him.*]

All the Watch. These are all our brother watchmen, we'll vouch for them——an' please your worships.

Wife. A plain case, brothers,——Oh, then you are the *Mohocks*, it seems, Gentlemen.

All the Mohocks. We are Gentlemen, Sirs: 'twas only an innocent frolick.

Wife. Frolicks for brutes and not for men.——
Watchmen, seize your prisoners.

Cloudy. Harkye, Sir——are you a *Mohock*——
or are you not a *Mohock*——[*Takes away the dagger, with which they pricked him.* Come, come, give up your poles and your lanthorns——hold up your head, friend——Mr. *Hannibal* I think they call him——
oh——I find you have ears to lose——I was afraid the pillory had been before-hand with me——come, rip.
[*The Watchmen strip the Mohocks.*]

Joan. Oh, *Peter*! *Peter*! and art not thee a *Mohock* then, *Peter*?

Gent. Have I been a captive of the *Mohocks*——
well——I vow, 'tis mighty happy, that I have preserved all my features entire for the ladies.

Emp. Pray, Gentlemen, give us our liberty.

All the Mohocks. We'll ask pardon.

Wife.

Emp. Treat us like gentlemen.

Wife. Let them be brought before us by ten o'clock

—— You may assure yourselves, Gentlemen——
these proceedings of yours shall be punished with the
utmost severity. [*Excunt Justices.*

All the Mohocks. We'll submit, ask pardon, or do
any thing.

Const. Come——let's call up the music that is be-
low, and rejoice for our happy deliverance——Let us
shew the Emperor here, that we can dance without his
instructions.

All. Agreed.

A Dance of Watchmen.

Const. This is the day——the joyful night indeed
In which *Great-Britain's* sons from the *Mohocks* are
freed.

Our wives and daughters they may walk the street,
Nor *Mohock* now, nor *Hawkubite* shall meet.

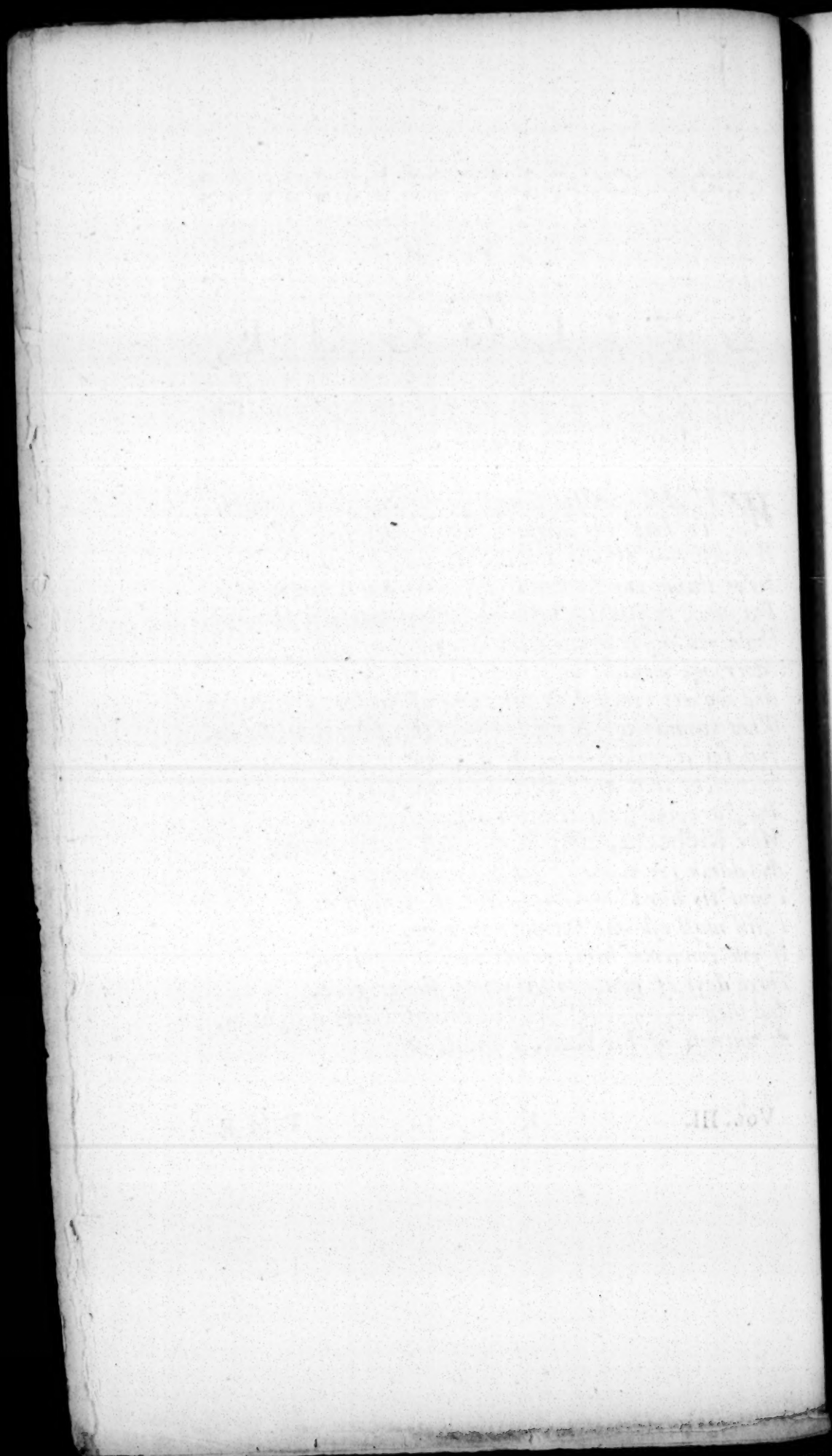
Mohock and *Hawkubite*, both one and all,
Shall from this very night date their down——fall.



T H E
E P I L O G U E,

Designed to be spoken by the person who
should have play'd *Joan Cloudy*.

W H A T woeful things do we poor folks endure,
To keep our spouses to ourselves secure?
We wives—(of one and all this may be said,)
Ne'er think our husbands safe,——but when in bed.
But now, to quit the wife——How would it please ye,
Could you dissolve the marriage noose as easy.
Marriage would then no more entail for life,
And coquets venture on the name of wife:
What woman would not!——if this scheme would do,
Just for a frolick——take a spouse or two.
Ye criticks that are scatter'd o'er the pit,
And stare and gape to catch descending wit,
Mere Mohocks, that on harmless authors prey,
And damn for want of sense a modern play,
I vow 'tis hard!——Yet if it must be so,
I still must ask one favour e'er I go.
If you condemn him, grant him a reprieve,
Three days of grace to the young sinner give,
And then——if this sad downfall does delight ye,
As witness of his Exit, I invite ye.

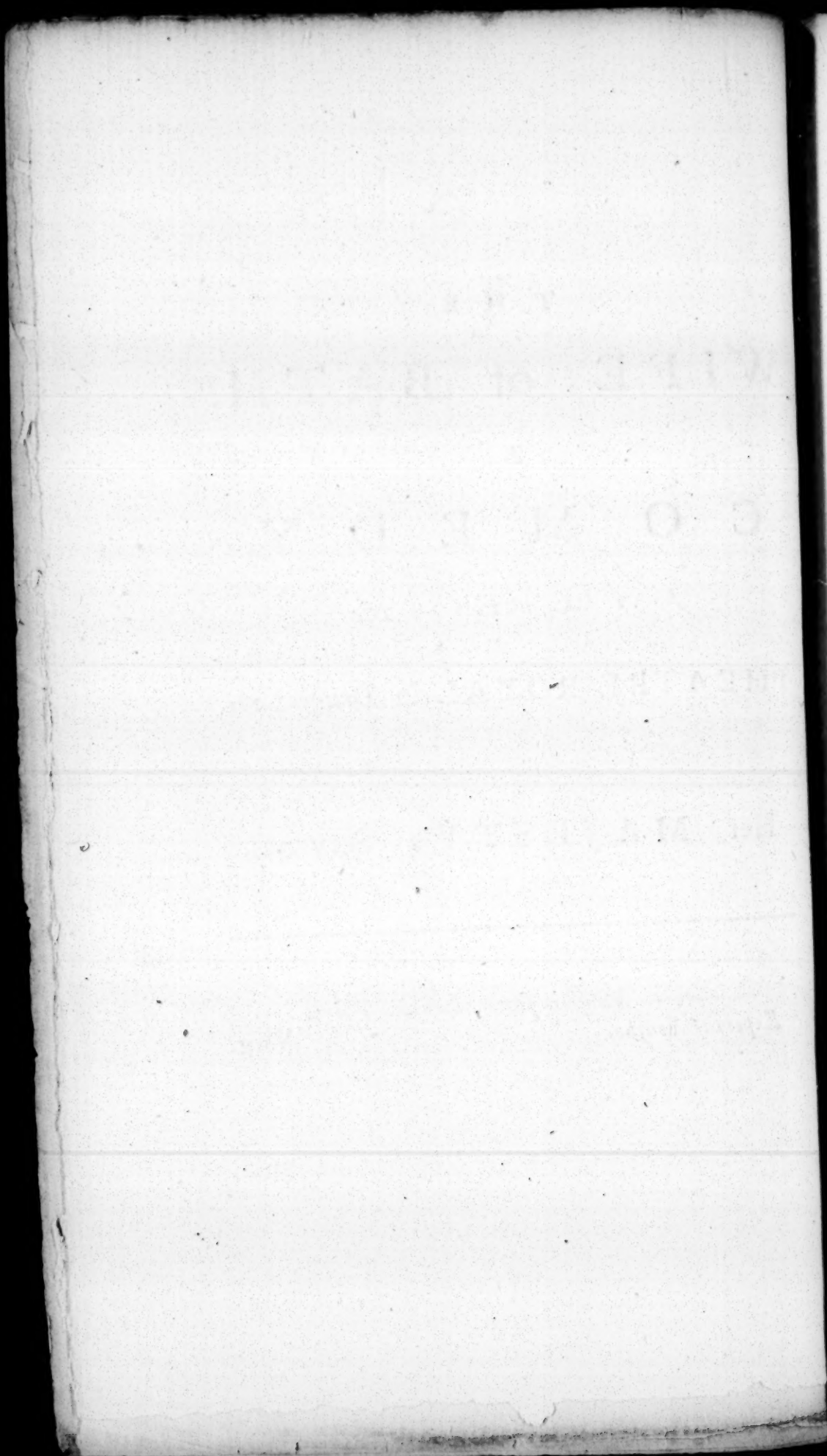


T H E
W I F E o f B A T H.
A
C O M E D Y,

AS IT WAS ACTED AT THE
THEATRE-ROYAL in *Drury-Lane*.

B Y
Her M A J E S T Y's Servants.

————— *Magicis fanos avertere Sacris*
Experiar Sensus. Virg.



P R O L O G U E.

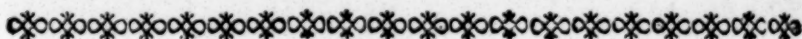
Spoken by Mrs. Mountfort.

*I*F ancient poets thought the Prologue fit,
To sport away superfluous starts of wit;
Why should we moderns lavish curs away,
And, to supply the Prologue, starve the Play?
Thus Plays, of late, like marriages in fashion,
Have nothing good besides the preparation.
How shall we do to help our author out,
Who both for Play and Prologue is in doubt?
He draws his characters from Chaucer's days,
On which our grandsires are profuse of praise;
When all mankind,—(if we'll believe tradition,)
Jogg'd on in settled conjugal fruition:
Then, as old wives with serious nod will tell us,
The wise, contented husband ne'er was jealous;
The youthful bride no sep'rate trading drives,
Ev'n citizens could——satisfy their wives.
The cautious virgin, ignorant of man,
No glances threw, nor exercis'd the fan,
Found love a stranger to her easy breast,
And 'till the wedding night——enjoy'd her rest.
No gilded chariot drew the ladies eyes,
Ensnar'd their hearts, and bore away the prize;
Then the strict father no hard bargains drove
For jointures——All their settlement was——love.
Believe all this who will,——for let me die!
They knew the world as well as you and I.
Lovers would then,——as now-a-days, forswear,
Seize the soft moment, and surprise the fair,
And many a modest, knowing bride was led,
With artful blushes to the nuptial bed.

Our

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

*Our author hath from former ages shewn,
Some ancient frailties which are still our own;
The Wife of Bath in our weak wives we find,
And superstition runs through all the kind;
We but repeat our grandsires actions o'er
And copy follies which were theirs before.*



Dramatis Personæ.

M E N.

Chaucer,	Mr. Wilkes.
Doggrell,	Mr. Pack.
Franklyn, <i>a rich Yeoman of Kent,</i>	Mr. Penkethman.
Doublechin, <i>a Monk,</i>	Mr. Bullock, Sen.
Merit, <i>in love with Florinda,</i>	Mr. Bullock, Jun.
Astrolabe, <i>an Astrologer,</i>	Mr. Ryan.
Antony, } <i>Servants to Franklyn,</i>	Mr. Norris.
William } <i>A Drawer,</i>	Mr. Lee.
	Mr. Spiller.

W O M E N.

Myrtilia, <i>a lady of quality,</i>	Mrs. Porter.
Florinda, <i>Franklyn's daughter,</i>	Mrs. Mountfort.
Alifon, <i>the wife of Bath.</i>	Mrs. Bicknell.
Busy, <i>Myrtilia's woman,</i>	Mrs. Saunders.

SCENE *an Inn, lying in the road between London
and Canterbury.*

Time, from Nine at night, to Nine in the morning.

T H E



T H E
W I F E of B A T H.



A C T I. S C E N E I.

S C E N E, A L A R G E H A L L.

Enter FRANKLYN and DOGGRELL.

FRANKLYN.

****LORINDA*, poor rogue, little thinks she
* shall lie in wedding sheets to-morrow.--
* *F* * Never fear, boy, I'll answer for the girl's
* * inclinations.

****Dog*. Her beauty is, I must confess, most
exquisitely charming, and her fortune will allow of no
exceptions; but you know her extraction, Sir,——

Frank. What——though I did marry my servant-
maid, I have pretty good assurances my daughter is of
my own getting;——and, in troth, a staunch country
Gentleman, and an honest, plain, downright *Kentish*
damself,

damsel, may raise as good a breed as a Lady and a *Vallet de Chambre*, though her Lord have faith and fondness enough to own himself the father.

Dog. But in the eye of the world, Sir, a family is corrupted by an alliance with the vulgar——What a scurvy figure will my marriage make in a genealogical table, to be recorded in this manner;——*Francis D'Ogrelle*, Esq; married *Florinda*, daughter of *Amos Franklyn*, by *Dorothy Turnbroach* his kitchen-wench——faugh——

Frank. Why,——how now, *Frank*?——*D'Ogrelle*,——Do——-puppy, I think,——thy grandfather's name was *Doggrell*, and thy father's name was *Doggrell*. Look you, Sir,——and when my daughter loses the name of *Franklyn*, she shall be called no otherwise than *Florinda Doggrell*, d'ye see.

Dog. Not so passionate, Sir, I beseech you,——the fault in former centuries lay in the orthography and pronunciation.——My name is originally of *French* extraction, and is written with a *D*, and an apostrophe——as much as to say, *De Ogrelle*, which was the antique residence of my ancestors.

Frank. Come, come, *Frank*, this is not a time of day to dispute of families——we are now got about the mid-way to *Canterbury*, and within twelve miles of my house.

Enter Merit.

Mer. Excuse my freedom, Gentlemen,——I am about to engage myself in an affair of consequence, and beg you would oblige me in being witnesses of the contract.

Frank. A mortgage or a conveyance of some part of thy patrimony, I suppose. How much *per cent.* do you give in these ticklish times with good security?

Mer. Mine, Sir, is only a conveyance of my person——and knowing the inconstancy of female love, I would

would not willingly, methinks, have so serious an affair as matrimony depend long upon a woman's pleasure.

Frank. Very right, Sir:——a good failor always lays hold of the first fair wind, and a judicious lover never stays for a second consent.

Mer. Come on then, old Gentleman.

Frank. Here *Frank* is an example for you,——a brisk, jolly, handsome young fellow, that plunges into matrimony with a resolution.——Pray, Sir, may I presume to know your mistress's pedigree?

Mer. If you would judge of her descent by her conversation, *Pallas* was her mother; if by her beauty, *Venus*.

Frank. But who was it, friend, that begot her?

Mer. That is a point we must leave to the mother's determination.

Frank. Is she of this country Sir?

Mer. In short, Sir,——she is a plain, simple *Kentish* yeoman's daughter——she has virtue without formality——all the good breeding of the court with the country simplicity——beauty without vanity, and wit without affectation.

Dog. But a family, Sir, would add a lustre to these endowments; and these qualities appear very awkward in a woman of mean extraction.

Mer. Virtue, Sir, becomes all alike, and there's no true nobility without it.

Frank. Well said i'faith——What say you to that Mr. *Doggrell*, with your *D'Ogrelles*, pedigrees, family-tables, and extractions?

Dog. You expose me, Sir,——*D'Ogrelle* is my name,——and were I not under some restraint by my father's will, your behaviour would make me quit all pretensions to your daughter.

Frank. Never insist then upon pedigrees, *Frank*.——A single tree in my wood, I'll maintain it, is worth all the genealogical trees in the universe.-----Come, *Frank*,
let

let us go and be witnesses of his happy conjunction :
 ———And to-morrow, Sir, I shall desire you would
 make one at the wedding of this Gentleman with my
 daughter.

Mer. You do me too much honour, Sir.

Frank. You must know, Sir, that we came thus far
 with the *Canterbury* pilgrims, ——— certainly the most
 diverting company that ever travelled the road ——— and
 my house lying in the way, I design to invite them all
 to the wedding to-morrow.

Dog. And there is a nun of quality, I am told, hath
 just now joined them.

Frank. The wife of *Bath* is enough to make any
 mortal split his sides. She is as frolicsome as a young
 wench in the month of *May*, plays at romps with the
 Pilgrims all round, throws out as many quaint jokes as
 an *Oxford* scholar ; ——— and, in short, exerts her-
 self so facetiously, that she is the mirth of the whole
 company.

Dog. But the support of the society is Mr. *Chaucer* —
 he is a Gentleman of such inexhaustible good sense,
 breeding, and civility, that since I have had the happi-
 ness to converse with him, he hath honoured some of
 my productions with his approbation.

Frank. Hold, hold, *Frank.* ——— If once thou dost
 let loose thy tongue upon the topic of poetry, we shall
 quickly be bewildered upon the muses promontory. —
 Ah boy! ——— to-morrow night it will be thy turn.
 ——— Come, Sir, we are now ready to wait on you.

[*Exeunt.*]

Enter Myrtilia in a Nun's habit, Alifon and Busie.

Alif. A nun at these years, and with so much beau-
 ty! ——— Fye, fye, Madam; ——— nunneries and hos-
 pitals had originally the same institution; ——— they
 are only for the maimed, and those that are worn out
 in

in the service. And shall a lady that hath all her five senses in perfection, with the bloom of youth on her cheeks, and sprightliness in her eyes, hide all those charms in a cloister?——lookye, my dear, if you are for confinement——I would, by all means, advise you to a husband.

Myrt. When 'tis allotted by the stars, that a person shall always remain in the state of virginity, 'tis but common prudence to retire from the world.

Alif. Were it my case, by my troth, I should beg the stars pardon.——Besides, I do not think it in the power of all the stars in the firmament to influence so ticklish a thing as a woman's inclination.

Myrt. But all the Astrologers that I ever was so unhappy as to consult, seem to hint at the same thing.

Alif. An Astrologer's prediction, like an oracle, is not to be unravelled 'till after the event——and do but once, honey, pitch upon a husband——and the planets, I'll pass my word for it, shall very readily give their consent.

Myrt. Besides, I have tried three Midsummer-eves successively; and there hath not been so much as the shadow of a man.

Alif. What signifies the shadow, when your ladyship hath youth and beauty enough at any time to command the substance?

Myrt. But it is my resolution to retire.

Busie. And mine——if you stick to your resolution, to quit your service—for, may I never be kiss'd—if I can perceive that I have the least bit of Nun's flesh about me.

[*Aside.*

Alif. Let me look on your hand, honey,——I have as good an insight into palmistry, though I say it myself, as the best of them all.——The learned vary——Come, come, Madam, never despair.

Myrt. My fortune is already determined.

Alif.

Alif. Bow your hand a little more——[*Looking on her hand.*] There there, enough!——Ods-my-life, a downright miracle of a hand—matrimony without crosses, and a most delicate table—and a brace, i'facking, of as proper handsome husbands as ever ask'd a lady the question.

Bus. Let us see what my hand promises——Come, come, a husband is every woman's concern.

Myrt. Nay, now I recollect, a fortune-teller some time since told me the very same thing.

Alif. And that mole there, beneath the tip of your right-ear, is a most shrewd sign——No, I won't tell you where there is another.—Ah Madam, Madam!

Bus. Ay——this must be one here——with two little things branching out; for that is an infallible mark of a husband.

Alif. You search in the wrong place, child.

Bus. Well——I'm satisfied of this——if there is never a one appears in my hand.——I'm sure there is one in my heart.

Alif. Lookye here, my dear, thanks to my lucky planets,——I have made a shift to dispatch five already——and welcome the sixth, say I,——One, two, three, four, five,——and here is another little tiny thing; and if it will not reach to a husband, my life for it——my good conduct shall make it stretch to a hopeful gallant.

Myrt. Methinks one's natural inclination would induce one to try matrimony once,——purely for the sake of novelty——the destiny cannot be avoided.

Alif. Destiny, honey, is lodged in never a conjuror's tongue in Christendom——and a fig, say, I for that conjuror that doth not consult a lady's disposition, her age, her complexion, and the natural bent of her temper.

Myrt. But Matrimony, perhaps, may be the more severe penance.

Alif.

Alif. Most husbands——I have experienced them, Madam,——are tame quiet sort of animals——'Tis the wife's own fault if ever she gives up the reins of government——and for jealousy, I'd advise you to my remedy. Seem to be more jealous of him.——I watch'd his waters for him;——would he, an old niggard, have had ever the less light for letting a neighbour light a candle at his lanthorn?

Myrt. But you know we promise obedience——and is not the husband the Lord, the Head of his wife?

Alif. They claim the title, chicken; but, ods-my-life! we always dispute the power;——and women, like the rudders of ships, always govern their heads.

Myrt. You give one mighty good encouragement, Madam.

Alif. I was ever, from my cradle, a friend to the mathematics, Madam: Why, one that pukingly dies a maid, loses the end of creation, and in short, leaves the world without having ever tasted the true refreshments of life.

Myrt. But are you sure that these marks signify husbands?

Alif. Am I sure that I ever knew the comforts of one?——Why one of 'em, as I hope for his fellow, is at least six feet high.

Busf. Nay, mine is a very long one too——

[*Looking on her hand.*]

Alif. 'Tis a strange thing, that our *English* Ladies should be so backward in coming to knowledge——Why, an *Italian* Girl thinks at Twelve, meditates at Thirteen, ripens into perception at Fourteen;——and here we shall have an awkward *English* bride want advice on her wedding-day, though, she is not married 'till Five and Twenty.——Go, make haste, to bed: child, think of the fortune that I have told you, and dream of a husband.

[*Exit.*]

Myrt. You remember, *Busfe*, I flung two husbands at the last fortune-book.

Bus. Yes, Madam.

Myrt. And I dreamed of a strange Gentleman, when I slept about a week since with the bride-cake under my pillow.

Bus. If dreaming would have supplied one with a sweetheart, I am sure I had not been unprovided at this time of day. [*Aside.*]

Myrt. What is it o'Clock?

Bus. Almost ten, Madam.

Myrt. You remember, I suppose, this is St. *Agnes's* night, and that I resolve to try the experiment of the dumb-cake. [*Exit.*]

Enter Chaucer.

Chauc. What, turned Pilgrim, my dear!—And must love give place to religion!—[*Kisses her.*] Have I no hopes but by turning Friar, and calling my love continence and mortification—I was very luckily, a day or two since, informed of Lady *Myrtilla's* resolution.——

Bus. Oh dear! Sir, pray how long have you been returned from your travels?

Chau. But just arrived—Absence Mrs. *Busse*, has not been able to deface the impressions of love,——and still the Lady *Myrtilla* reigns in my bosom, haunts my waking thoughts, and is ever present in my dreams.——I think, I talk, I write of nothing but her.

Bus. I am afraid, Mr. *Chaucer*, your case will be the same as the boy's in the fable,——you have talked of love, artillery, flames, eyes and darts, so long in jest, that it will be very difficult to gain belief, now you are in earnest.

Chau. But pray child, is devotion or discontent the cause of her retirement?——For Mad-houses and Nunneries are as much inhabited by disappointed lovers as devotees——and I fear, should a Cloister be her choice, the other would soon be my fate.

Bus.

Bus. Very probably, Sir, for you'll have a double pretence to it—as you are a wit too.

Chau. You are smart, Mrs. *Busie*—But are there no hopes to divert her from this voluntary banishment?—Has she any symptoms of love?—Does she talk incoherently, sigh often, or read romances?

Bus. There are methods which perhaps might have some influence upon her;—but confidantes, Sir, must not divulge secrets.

Chau. Say'st thou so, my dear girl?—Am I come so opportunely to thy relief—when thou hast so uneasy a thing as a secret in thy possession?

Bus. A secret, Sir, is as safe in a woman's keeping, as a Lady's reputation in a man's—But pray, dear Mr. *Chaucer*, don't ask me.

Chau. Would you have your Lady lost purely upon a punctilio?—I know, my dear, you have conquered your sex, and have the knack of secrecy—but a secret of this consequence—

[Gives her gold.

Bus. Is of consequence, I confess.—You know, Sir, my Lady is as superstitious as an ignorant Abbot,—her humour by day depends upon her dreams by night, spilling of salt throws her into the vapours,—half the week is lost upon account of unlucky days—and she has an entire confidence in Astrologers—And those wretches alone have past the severe sentence of virginity on her.

Chau. And so she designs to sacrifice all the pleasures of life to their ignorance.

Bus. And for fear she should change her mind, which you know we are pretty much given to, she has resolved to put it out of her own power, by retiring into a Cloister.—But she just now was a little wavering.

Chau. Have the dictates of Nature then at last overbiaised her superstition?

Bus. You must know, Sir, the Wife of *Bath*, just now made her a visit,—and merely ridiculed her out

of her project.—She consulted her hand, and very agreeably contradicted all her former fortune by a promise of two husbands.

Chau. Which the Lady I presume seems fond of believing.

Bus. Yes, on my conscience——and fond of *having* likewise, with the permission of the planets——this being St. *Agnes's* night, she hath provided the dumb-cake, and performs the ceremony, in order, if 'tis possible, to get a glimpse of matrimony.

Chau. The most lucky incident in the world,——Now have I the opportunity to make my approaches by way of her superstition, I can never fail of conquest——This night, pretty creature, I'll play the apparition.

Bus. Just my thought, I vow——This key of her closet, I suppose, may be of some service——for that body of yours will scarcely be able to enter a chink, or pass through a key-hole——remember the hour,——and make haste to your post, Sir.

[*Exeunt severally.*]

Enter Frankly, Doggrell, Doublechin and Alifon.

Alif. One wedding, the proverb says, begets another: What think, you, old heart of oak, shall experience supply the want of youth?—Come, let you and I for once verify the old saying——Give me thy hand, old boy.

Frank. Hold, hold, dame! Marry in haste and repent at leisure——There is a proverb for your proverb.

Deub. But matrimony is not like common crimes, Mr. *Franklyn*——for the most tedious repentance can never encourage a hope for absolution.

Frank. We are too old now-a-days to pretend to those things.

Alif. Slidikins!——Old, old!——Pray do not measure my corn with your bushel, old Dry bones!——This person

person of mine—I would have you to know, like a medlar——grows the sweeter for its age, old grey-beard.

Enter Merit.

Mer. Shall I prevail with you, Sir, to do the office of a father upon this occasion?

Frank. With all my heart, Sir.

Alif. Ha! young stripling!—are you our bold adventurer?—A little of my advice, younker, would do you no harm, I believe,—Soft and fair,—Take care of your constitution.—Matrimony is a lasting entertainment.—[*Exit Merit.*] This is very hard upon your order, father *Doublechin*,—Meer tantalization—to see matrimony so often before your eyes, yet never to have it in your power to taste it—But stolen fruit, stolen fruit!—Ah father *Doublechin*!

Enter Merit leading Florinda: she starts back in surprise.

Flor. Ha!—my father!—I am undone. [*Aside.*]

Frank. *Florinda!* hurry durry!—what is the matter now? Death! This is all trick and banter. [*Aside.*]

Mer. My too much care hath betrayed me. [*Aside.*]

Alif. Heyday! What, are we all knocked on the head at once?—Come, you hoary-pate there, deliver up your charge—And you, Mr. Sanctity, make haste and do your office,—Young folks are impatient.

Frank. What wind, in the name of fury, blew you hither, wench?

Flor. Oh, Sir!—Had not you thus timely interposed, I had been utterly lost.

Frank. By your leave, Sir, [*To Merit.*] This, *Frank*, is my daughter. [*Gives her to Doggrell.*] How, girl?—What, without your father's consent?—But I hope, the rogue hath not began at the fag-end of the ceremony.

Alis. Lookye, old friend, we will some time or other enjoy our own choice,—and if we cannot procure it in a husband, i'fackins, we will make it up in a gallant.—How, in the name of *Cupid*, can you baulk so handsome a young fellow?—Come hither, stripling,—shew your shapes and walk gracefully!—See, how portly he plants himself—Ah rogue!

Frank. Harkye, fellow, what pretensions had you to seduce my child,—hah.

Mer. Your daughter, Sir, is still at your own disposal—and I only made use of this device to ask your consent.

Frank. A very pretty excuse!—Old birds are not caught with chaff, friend.—You are a fine hoity-toity thing, I perceive,—I'll warrant, I secure you, Madam, from any further excursions.

Flor. He stole me, Sir, threatened me,—and would have forced me to his arms.—And what, alas! can a weak woman do?

Mer. What does she drive at by all this?—How easy she seems under this disappointment!—Ah! woman, woman! [*Aside.*]

Frank. Well, child, however—since he has set agog your inclinations, you shall not want a husband.—This worthy gentleman is of my providing.—Let us have no hums nor ha's, nor fiddle-faddle consideration.—Come, father *Doublchin*, and you there, Mr. *Kidnapper*, now 'tis your turn to be witness.

Dog. Let us first, Sir, be assured that the lady has not disposed of herself—Perhaps we may now be invading another gentleman's property.

Frank. Has a thief a property in stolen goods, because he hath them in possession?

Flor. My duty, Sir, obliges me to comply with your commands—But, pray, Sir, grant me some small time to recover my fright—my spirits are so much disordered that I cannot support myself. [*Faints.*]

Frank.

Frank. What, I'll warrant,——the terrible shape of a father put you in this consternation, hussy.

Alij. Poor girl, poor girl! Here, child——drink a little of my cordial, a little of my cordial. [*Drinks herself.*] This is the life and soul of a traveller.

Then who would not be a bride? [*Sings.*

Then who would not be a bride?

For the sweetest kifs,

Is not half of her blifs:

This all will say——who have try'd.

Frank. A husband is the best physic for her—and though, like all other doses, it may seem nauseous at first, yet I'll warrant she'll like the operation,—Come, come, marry her, Boy, and write thy own *Epithalamium*.

Dog. *Epithalamium*, Sir?

Alij. What, marry her to a poet? The gingle of love in a copy of verses will never answer a wife's expectation.——Besides, poverty is the mere bane of love.

Frank. But Mr. *Doggrell*, they tell me, writes only for his diversion, nay, he pays the bookfeller for printing his works,——and writes the most like a gentleman of any man on this side *Parnassus*.

Dog. Your father, Madam, does me too much honour,——but no poet ever celebrates his wife.——The word Wife, methinks, has as ill a sound in poetry as in the mouth of a husband.

Frank. Harkye, you woman-stealer,——you had best withdraw, lest I let loose my indignation upon you, and send you to the gallows, to give Mr. *Doggrell* here a subject for an elegy.

Dog. *D'Ogrelle*,——I beseech you, Sir.

Mer. Sure this is the most malicious adventure that ever crossed an unfortunate lover. [*Aside.---Exit.*

Doub. After supper, you may command me, Sir; for if you can live upon love, good people, 'tis what one of my substance cannot so easily subsist upon.

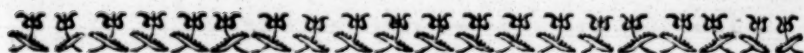
Frank.

Frank. Well,——compose yourself, Girl; Mr. Doggrell, she is your charge.

Dog. Madam—— [Leading her off.

To your relief your ardent lover flies.

Ah! those attractive lips, and dear deluding eyes!
[Exeunt.



ACT II. SCENE I.

SCENE Continues.

Enter Doggrell and Florinda.

DOGGRELL.

I Vow, Madam, to consider your beauty and pedigree together, you are just like a rose grafted on a thorn.—That was a most egregious wrong step of your father's.

Flor. My father, 'tis true, with all the inconsiderateness of youth, married merely for love,——an action, I must own, unbecoming a Gentleman.

Dog. The chief end of matrimony, I conceive, is the support of a family, and the increase of an estate;——but so many graces, Madam,—so many charms!——will overballance a small defect of genealogy.

Flor. Then, I have the misfortune, Sir, to be so extremely like my mother, that upon all occasions my presence

presence gives a hint to reflexion.—Now, will I work him into a dislike of me by seeming to strike in with his humour.

[*Aside.*

Dog. An unhappiness, indeed, Madam,—Love generally proves an edged tool to an old man's fingers.

Flor. This error of my father will make me in every respect submit myself to his pleasure, to avoid the like inconvenience myself.

Dog. Let me die, if she does not seem fond of me!

[*Aside.*

Flor. To convince you, Sir, that I scorn to act dishonourably with a Gentleman of your merit—I ought to acquaint you with another disgrace, that a slip of one of my ancestors entailed upon the family; —But should my father know—

Dog. Nay, Madam, I am as secret as a Confessor—as I am a man of honour.

Flor. My great, great grandfather, Sir,—

Dog. What of him, Madam?

Flor. Was—hanged—Sir.

Dog. Hanged—and I will follow his example sooner than marry into a family made up of knaves and fools.

[*Aside.*

Flor. I entreat you, Sir, ask me no further—It is mighty hard, methinks, that an ancestor's failings should devolve upon his posterity.

Dog. So that, Madam, your father's indiscretion will grace my coat with a spit—and your great, great grandfather's slip, as your Ladyship terms it, blazon my escutcheon with a gallows. Ha! ha! ha!

Enter Anthony and William at a distance.

Ant. Lookye there,—Yonder she is, i'faith—softly, softly *William*,—Swop upon 'en at once, knock 'en down, and I will secure young mistress.

Will. But what shall we do with the plaguy toad when we have caught en?—Is it not a hanging matter, *Antony*? Thee understand'tt the Law to be sure, who canst read the Statue-Book, and draw out leaves
for

for maaſter.—'Sbud, 'tis a rare thing to be larned.

Ant. We muſt firſt and foremoſt enquire, whether or not a dafter be goods and chattels, *William*—In the next place, d'ye ſee, whether or no, ſhe ſtole he, or he ſtole ſhe;—But according to the beſt of my reading, it ſeems plainly to be a raviſhment.—But ſtay, let us catch en firſt, —Lay hold of his ſpit-frog *William*—for all theſe ſwaggering blades courage lies within-side the ſcabbard.

Will. Hoh, hoh ! Sir—As flat as a flounder, by *George*,—[*Trips up Doggrell's heels.*] A cord, a cord, *Antony*,—Lookye, Sir, we kill foxes for making bold with our geefe, and hang dogs for choaking our ſheep.——And i'faith I'll make thee an example to all fortune ſtealers.——What, is maaſter's only chick a bit for your chaps, Sirrah ?

Dog. Pray, Gentlemen, —My money is at your ſervice ; but I entreat you, Gentlemen, ſpare my life for that fair lady's repoſe,——May I be informed of the occaſion of this aſſault?——Or are you officers of the law,——At whoſe Suit, Gentlemen ?

Ant. Lookye, *William*, I find it plainly to be a hanging matter, d'ye ſee,——For look ye, d'ye ſee,——tho'f ſtealing of a woman ſhould be no felony, we can indiſt 'en for ſtealing the rigging and appurtenances, d'ye ſee, as in the firſt place, *William*.——

Item, For ſtealing of miſtreſs's head-geer, with all the dangling ribbons, lace, &c. thereunto belonging ; a ſilk gown and petticoat, and all miſtreſs's wearing apparel, d'ye ſee ; for tho'f a Jury, perhaps, would not bring in the bare woman above the value of ten-pence,——yet the cloathing, *William*.

Will. Always reckoned the chiefſt part of a woman ---As plain as a pike-ſtaff, as clear as the ſun, *Antony*.

Flor. Pray treat the Gentleman with more civility,——What brought you hither, *Antony* ?

Ant. Oh, miſtreſs, miſtreſs ! You left the whole houſe at home in a moſt pitiful taking——For my

own

own part, I would rather have lost the best weather of all the flock, than such a mishap should have happened to the family.

Will. To be plain with you, forsooth, a woman costs a hugeous deal the rearing, and we could never have answered such a loss to maafter, forsooth.

Dog. Upon my honour! Gentlemen.

Flor. They are my father's servants, Sir,——You are in no danger.——But I shall not endeavour wholly to undeceive them, since their care in confining him may possibly set me at liberty. [Aside.

Dog. Downright barbarity, I vow!

Will. 'Sbud, chez believe 'tis ravishment in good earnest, now,——for young mistress excuses 'en hugeous feelingly;——But how shall we order matters? I thing 'twill be the safest way to hang up the prisoner to rights, to save the labour of carriage.

Dog. I vow, Gentlemen,——I beg you——you mistake the person,——I was never, upon my honour, concerned in seducing the young lady.——The rusticity of these mortals, Madam, leads them into innumerable absurdities.

Will. Never talk to us of your Nummeribble Absurdities, nor speak your pedlar's *French*, d'ye see,——to juggle young mistress out of our clutches again, d'ye see,——there, there, bind 'en a little tighter, *Antony*.

Ant. I cannot well tell whether we can answer hanging of 'en, or no,——But suppose, *William*, we let 'en have the honour of dying the death of a gentleman, and we will kill 'en in a duel,——I have heard say, that is but manslaughter, if the worst come to the worst,——Sa! Sa! [Makes passes at a distance.

Dog. As I am a man of honour, I was no way concerned. I appeal to the fair lady, there.

Flor. Have a care, *Antony*, this Gentleman makes his application to me, with the approbation of my father.

Ant.

Ant. Do thou guard the prisoners, d'ye see,——
Here is a Justice, they say, below in the inn——we
had best ask his worship's opinion before we kill 'em
outright, d'ye see.

[*Going to shut them into a closet together.*]

Will. Oh, oh, gracious! hold, hold,——let us never
pen them in together——why——'sife man, that
is the main way to become accessories ourselves.

Ant. Why, odsmylife, Mistress,——do but let
Maafter know that your mouth begins to water after
man, and my life for it he will never starve the cause.

Enter Franklyn and Doublechin.

Will. Oh dear, Maafter, Maafter, we were all
like to come to a most lamentable mishap,——Young
Mistress, forsooth——'Sbidikins, I am overjoyed to see
you,——'Sbud! who thought to have found your wor-
ship's good grace here——But as I was saying, young
Mistress, forsooth, took it in her head to run astray,
and faith, was stole——or else laid the moveable in
the thief's way, forsooth.

Ant. Oh, Sir, oh dear Sir, the house at home is in a
most piteous taking.——We rose all the whole parish, as
a body may say, and sent all the labourers abroad, *East,*
West, North, and South.

Frank. Hold, hold, *Antony!*——I know of my daugh-
ter's proceedings.

Ant. See how the plaguy toad looks.——Here is
Maafter's honour for you now, Mr. *Brazenface.*

Frank. You are under a mistake, *Antony.*——Un-
bind the Gentleman——But however, I cannot but
commend your diligence,——I hope, *Frank,* you
will excuse the ignorance of these fellows.

Will. Under a mistake, *Antony?*——Under a mistake,
Do'st hear?

Ant. Ay---Under a mistake, under a mistake.

[*Exeunt Antony and William.*]

Frank.

Frank. Well, Damsel, are your spirits in tune yet, —and how stand your inclinations affected towards honest *Frank*? Only give the word, Boy, —and father *Doublechin* shall secure you in a more pleasing bondage--- I will warrant my Girl shall do her duty. —What say you Damsel? —Come father *Doublechin*, you should never let love or a good dinner cool, for want of your assistance.

Dog. Matrimony throws one at once off from the conversation of the *Beau-Monde* ——— a husband among them is neither allowed to be handsome, well-bred, or witty. ——— He loses all his former *Politessé* with his liberty, ——— and then again my undervaluing my family lays me open to satire; and when the ladies are out of hope their tongues are under no restraint.

[*Aside.*

Frank. Why, *Frank*! ——— what still shall-I-shall-I? ——— Is this owing to your behaviour Mrs. Contradiction; Come, hussy, shew what a dutiful wife you will make by your obedience to your father.

Flor I am entirely at your disposal, Sir. ——— I may now safely venture to consent without running the risque of his compliance.

[*Aside.*

Frank. Here is a glorious girl for you, *Frank* ——— Come, father *Doublechin*, all parties are now agreed.

Dog. I must confess, Sir, the Lady's merits are beyond all dispute ——— but your dishonourable proceedings, Sir, have put a stop to the progress of my amour.

Frank. My dishonourable proceedings, *Frank*!---

Dog. I am not to be imposed upon, Sir, in a thing that so nearly concerns my posterity.

Frank. What, still upon the old string?---Ah, *Frank*, *Frank*, that love can never be sincere that raises so many objections.

Dog. Think of your great grandfather, Sir---

Frank. He was a Gentleman every inch of him; Marry into the family of Sir *Thomas Pedigree* ——— and

I will warrant you, he could trace out his genealogy for two or three hundred years beyond the conquest.

Dog. When I find myself once imposed upon, I always distrust the same person in his whole proceedings. — Who was your great grandfather's physician, Sir, during his last sickness?

Frank. Come, come, *Frank*, never endeavour to perplex the matter. — These poets talk so allegorically, there is no understanding them. — We never had one of our generation prescribed to death — nor spoiled the breed of our family with bolusses, pills and potions: — We never had any physician belonging to our house but nature, nor any distemper but age.

Dog. 'Tis more honourable to die by hands of the physician than the hangman, Sir.

Frank. True, *Frank*. You may plead the custom of the world for it. — But dying is dying — and I believe dead men make but small difference between poison and a halter. — Here father *Doublechin*, I join them together — Now do you clap on the matrimonial yoke.

Dog. Sir, I return the present; — the Lady is too deserving of me, — and so corrupt a family.

Frank. Oh these wicked weeds poetry and genealogy have quite overgrown poor *Frank's* understanding! — Thou a Poet!

Dog. Did not I check my anger by the dictates of philosophy, I should let loose my resentment — But, however, Sir, to let you see that I scorn to be a bubble, — I cannot help shewing you that I am acquainted with the secret history of your family, Sir, — I know, that your worship made an alliance with a lady of the kitchen, — and that your great grandfather, Sir, made his Exit on the Gallows. — You are my guardian, 'tis true, Sir, and have my fortune in your possession, but not in your disposal.

Frank. Heyday! — What in a passion, *Frank*? baulk my daughter, and belie my ancestors? Come, come, come, Girl. [*Exeunt Frank. Doub. and Flor.*

Ali.

Enter Alifon.

Ali. Well, honest heart!—My bonny champion!—beware head, old boy,—for i'faith I design to throw the stocking—Pure rosy cheeks, ruby lips, and a rolling eye!—A most glorious girl! worth a man's pawning his liberty for.

Dog. The match is entirely her father's proposal, Madam, not my inclinations.

Ali. 'Tis only for people of ordinary fashion now a-days to marry for love——Your men of quality, I know, marry one, and love another,——but a'dad——'tis a most confounded expensive way,——'tis this occasions so many divorces, and separate beds,——and lays the charge of keeping on a family.

Dog. Oh the charming Nun!——Your interest, Madam, might assist a desponding lover, and at the same time relieve a most beautiful Lady from confinement.

Ali. Very hard upon the young Lady, I vow,——Disappoint her lover, and afterwards leave her in the lurch! Drive the ox from the manger without ever designing to taste the hay! and what!——I'll warrant,——young Spindle-shanks——you take me for an old woman now,——that hath lost all relish;—only fit to set young folks together and think of times past.

Dog. I beg your pardon, Madam,——your complexion, 'tis true, seems a little to confute your airy temper——I vow, Madam, you have a world of vivacity.

Ali. What! make me undergo the fatigue!——without hope of sharing the diversion.

Dog. I beg your pardon, Madam,——you might command me in an office of the like nature.

Ali. Say'st thou so, my lad?——wilt thou do a good turn for receiving one?——I have a few wrinkles, 'tis true, contracted in my virginity and widowhood——

M 2

But

But matrimony would soon smooth and polish my countenance again.—believe me, Sir,—there is not a greater impairer of Beauty, than the longing of a Virgin, and the tedious expectation of a widow.—Why, who wears worse than your old Maids, Sir?

Dog. You speak with a wonderful deal of judgement, Madam.—I am informed she is a Lady of quality.—Will you oblige me, Madam, so far as to convey my sighs to the fair Lady, and do me the friendly office of a *Zephyr*?

Ali. Poor fellow!—Thou thinkest to make me only auxiliary—but i'faith, I'll lay ten to one, I'll make myself a principal in the end. [*Aside.*]

Dog. A *billet*, Madam.

Ali. Send her a *kiss*, boy,—there is some savour in such a present, and it brings some benefit to the bearer too.

Dog. Nay, Madam,—I shall tell her in the epistle that I desire to kiss her fair hands.

Ali. That is mere throwing away a kiss;—Come, come, stripling, Ladies know that the lips were made for kissing.

Dog. You must know, Madam, that I dedicate my vacant hours to the muses; and always write to the Ladies in verse.—The sentiments of love glide so smoothly into the Lady's heart, set off with the ornaments of poetry—that before thy are acquainted with the person, they are in love with the poet.

Ali. But the kiss,—Mr. *D'Ogrelle*.

Dog. 'Tis at your service Madam,—but we never send so rude a present to the Ladies. [*Kisses her.*]

Ali. Ah!—Again, my bonny hero,—I shall now speak most pathetically in thy commendation. [*Kisses him.*] Never fear, my Lad, I owe *Cupid* some good turns for past services!—I'll bring you together,—and, my life for it, she'll never be able to resist so charming a gentleman.

Dog. You are mighty obliging, Madam,—Beauty
warm

warms the Poet's imagination, and love is the very food of wit.——I have known a Gentleman, that could not read a Couplet with juster emphasis than a parish Clerk, write very prettily upon his Mistress's eyes——I have at least celebrated above fifty Ladies *pour passer le temps*, which I call love *ou-vertures*.——

A Lady of quality cannot pull off a glove, and display a beautiful little finger, but it immediately flows into a sonnet——A Lady's dress, a random glance, or a new suit of ribbands, are occasions that inspire a man of the least gallantry with the brightest turns of fancy.

Ali. A sure way, Sir, to attack the whole sex at once. and that man must take very bad aim, who shoots amongst a whole flock and brings off none of the game.

Dog. O charming Nun!

Ali. Come on then,——young *Ovid*.——Out with it——Extempore now.

Dog. Oh charming Nun of noble race——No, no,——Hold! of noble line.——But an affair of this nature requires more serious application——So, Madam, I shall beg leave to retire a moment or two to adjust my thoughts with more regularity. [Exit.

Alif. A handsome young fellow with little wit and a good stock of vanity. Why what then? He hath a good comfortable Proverb of his side, and have at him——i'faith——I, a match-maker, quotha——No, I thank my stars, I am not as yet of so cold a constitution to look on with indifference——A match-maker, a'dad, in other terms is nothing else but a lawful pimp. [Exit.

Enter Merit.

Mer. Accuse me! promise obedience!——throw herself under her father's protection!——all my hopes are grounded on her sex, for nature teaches them dissimulation.——A woman often smiles on the man she hates, and frowns on him she loves.

Draco. Coming, coming! Sir.

M 3

Enter

Enter a Drawer.

Mer. Hold, hold, Sirrah! ——— Where do you carry that wine?

Draw. Coming, coming, Gentlemen! ——— Into the *Dragon*, Sir, ——— I'll bring your honour a pint of the same immediately ——— Coming, coming! Sir ——— score a quart of sack in the *Dragon* ——— Below there.

Mer. Here's money for you Sirrah.

[Gives him money.]

Draw. Coming, coming! ——— I humbly thank your honour. Your honour may take my word for the matter ——— *Betty* is as tight and wholesome a girl as any in all the neighbourhood. You shall treat with her yourself ——— Coming, coming! Gentlemen.

Mer. How readily the rogue answers in his profession! ——— *Betty* may to-night oblige another customer, I want none of your pimping tricks, Sirrah, only lend me your apron and cap, tarry in the next room, and let me serve the company where you were going.

Draw. With all my heart, Sir. Here's my apron — make haste, Sir, or ten to one but you'll have your head broken for my delay.

Mer. Come, come, the cap, the cap. *[Knocking heard.]*

Draw. Coming, coming! Sir ——— plague of your impatience — a damn'd choleric old Chuff, I'll warrant ye; he has a most confounded passionate knock, there is nothing discovers a man's temper more than his manner in knocking ——— Coming, coming! Sir ——— A fine Gentleman, I see, will upon occasion make a good smart fort of a Drawer, ——— Here, here, nimbly, and away.

Mer. Why don't you bawl, Sirrah? D'ye hear? bawl, you dog ——— Come, come, the wine, and the glasses.

Draw. Coming, coming! Sir ——— there, there, away, away.

[Gives him the bottle and glasses.]

Mer. Coming, coming! Gentlemen.

[Exit. Draw.]

Draw. 'Tis a sad life that we Gentlemen Drawers must submit to, we are mere spaniels, brought under command by the discipline of the cane—the smart fellows at our expence give the first proofs of their courage, and we very often stand the spleen of a losing gamester.—A Drawer may be said to be thoroughly qualified, when he can lye with a good grace, pimp dexterously, be scoundrelled without grumbling, and bear a beating with patience. *[Exit.]*

SCENE *draws and discovers* Franklyn, Florinda, and Doublechin; *in a private Room; to them enter* Merit, *as the Drawer.*

Mer. Coming, coming! Sir.

Frank. No attendance to be had here! No attendance!

Mer. A choice flower—your worship—as rich a pipe as ever was brought from the *Canaries*, broached on purpose for your honour, quite amber.

[Pouring out sack.]

Frank. I'll Amber you, you dog you, you villain, you rascal! What, must we tarry here all night, you scoundrel, to wait your pelasure? Let me go, father, that I may thrash the dog into better manners. Make a Gentleman wait your pleasure, Sirrah!—But hold, I had best let him alone, for who knows but the dog may poison me in my sack.

Mer. I only stay'd—your honour—to broach a fresh pipe. I'll warrant the wine pleases your worship.

Doub. Keep your temper Mr. *Franklyn*,—the lad speaks well—keep your temper—Come, come, a glass will reconcile matters, and make us all friends—till about, boy.

Frank. A rogue, a dog, a downright wenching house by the attendance! Sirrah, I could find in my heart—

Doub.

Doub. Never lie at his mercy, Mr. *Franklyn*——he may poison you——who knows——he may——ay, he may poison you——[*Drinks.*] I vow, a most delicious flavour——Fill the angry Gentleman a glass, Sirrah, the other glass, my lad, and then I'll venture to pass my judgement——Come, Sir, my service to you——here's your daughter's inclinations. [*Drinks.*] Come, come, Sir, drink and be easy.

Frank. Lookye, father, your drinking after that extravagant rate is the ready way to lighten the bottle, but not my afflictions.

Flor. How every drefs becomes him! [*Aside.*]

Frank. As you say, father, the wine passes [*Drinks.*] neat and clean off the palate.——Go, Sirrah, fill the girl there a glass——never fear child——[*Doublechin holds Merit.*] I'll warrant, *Frank* will come to at last,——but who can suffer all these affronts?——Baulk my daughter, and abuse my family?

Doub. Why you relapse, Sir,——Here, you, *Hic & Ubique*, fill t'other glass to Mr. *Franklyn*——this, Sir, will inspire you with good humour——Come, Sir, here is to your daughter's happy conjunction.

Frank. Pox on it! As long as the bottle holds, we shall have nothing but the glass and your lips in conjunction——Stay, hold, father, spare the wine and your compliments a little, I beg you.——Sirrah, did not I order you to fill to my daughter?

Mer. Oh, my *Florinda*! may I hope you are constant? How could you quit me with so much disdain? and fly with pleasure to my rival's arms?

[*Aside to Florinda.*]

Flor. You wrong me, Sir, I am and ever will be constant. I feigned obedience, and looked with indifference on you, only to avoid suspicion.

Frank. Heyday! what is to be done here!

Flor.

Flor. See the sheets are well aired, d'ye hear me.
 [*To Merit aloud.*] I think, Sir, you are apt to take
 cold on the road. [*To Frank.*

Frank. Set down the bottle, rogue, and about your
 business,——But, father *Doublechin*, let me tell you,
 these objections of Mr. *Doggrell* look shrewdly suspicious.——Tax my family with the gallows, a rogue!
 a downright poetical fiction.

Flor. My seeming fondness towards him, chills his
 love——A lover that makes an easy conquest de-
 spises his victory. [*To Merit.*

Frank. What a vengeance! Now we have as much
 plague to get rid of you, as we had to bring you hither
 ——And the dog hath the impudence to be in close
 conference with my daughter!

Mer. Shall I order the Chamberlain to call your
 worship in the morning——all the rooms are ready
 ——You, Sir, I think lie in the *Mermaid*, you in
 the *Dolphin*, and your Ladyship ——

Frank. Hold, Sirrah, her Ladyship shall be disposed
 of as I think fit——Fetch me the key of her apart-
 ment, d'ye hear.——I'll allow of no such private
 caballing——About your business, Sirrah.

Doub. Come, wash off the remains of your peevish
 humour with a glass of sack, Sir——See here, Sir,
 the very look of it brightens a man's countenance.——
 Come Madam, here is a health to your lover. [*Drinks.*

Mer. My master, Sir, has three pipes of this same
 wine, neat as it came over, of the true natural flavour,
 without the least adulteration——I'll watch every
 motion, and be always ready, my dearest creature, to
 fly to your relief. [*To Florinda.*

Flor. The first favourable opportunity you may ex-
 pect me. [*To Merit.*

Frank. See the impudence of this rogue.——What
 still there, Sirrah; away, carry the remainder of the
 bottle into my daughter's chamber——I'll con-
 duct her thither.

Mer.

Mer. Coming, coming! Gentlemen.

[*Exit.*

Frank. An impudent coxcomb——Come daughter, to-night you are under my protection, to-morrow you shall be under your husband's protection——While the steed is safe, is the time to secure the door.——

Frank. you will find, upon a night's consideration, will be convinced of his folly.——To-morrow morning, father.

Doub. I'll attend you, Sir.

Flor. Since marriage binds us fast in lasting bands,
Love that unites our hearts, shall join our
hands.

[*Aside.*

[*Exeunt.*

ACT III. SCENE I.

SCENE *Lady Myrtilia's Apartment.*

The SCENE draws and discovers Myrtilia leaning on a Table, set off with a Cake and a Bottle of Wine: Busie is seated at a distant part of the Stage. To them enters Chaucer, who places himself at the Table, he eats; and drinks to Myrtilia, who continues in silence; he afterwards makes Love to her by Signs;---she still remains in the same Posture; Chaucer at last being no longer able to contain himself, rises from the Table and advances towards her with the profoundest Respect, and, kneeling at her Feet thus accosts her in a Tragic Strain.

CHAUCER.

SINCE the kind Stars to mutual love constrain,
Why should the tongue conceal our secret pain?
Was it for this, inexorable Fair,
Your Magic drew me through the distant air?
Tho'

Tho' some curs'd charm your wonted speech denies,
At least shed pity from those radiant eyes,
And look me into hope.——

In short, Madam, you see destiny will have it so; and we have nothing else to do but to submit.——Come, Come, Madam, let us lose no time, the yoke of matrimony sets best upon young shoulders.——Since the tongue is upon the reserve, let us make use of the lovers language, and interpret by the eyes;

*We from the ladies eyes our fate may learn,
And in those glasses love or hate discern.*

What! both your tongue and eyes under command?—
Let me die if I do not think you the only Lady in Christendom that hath either of them in her power.——
I vow, Madam, you have an exquisite pretty hand——
so finely turned——

[He offers to take her by the hand: she shrieks and runs out of the room.]

Bus. Go, you unthinking creature, you!—— You forgot you were a spirit.

Chau. That is true, as you say, child——my love is not so spiritual as it should be——but, pox on't, the flesh has so much interest in this whimsical passion, that it will be meddling, spite of one's teeth.

Bus. Why, you should not have spoken one syllable, much less have offer'd to touch her.

Chau. We lovers are generally guilty of most egregious blunders——How could any mortal think to gain upon a woman by Silence? For the man that talks much among them, is always esteemed pretty conversation.

Bus. Hark! What noise is that? as I am alive, all the whole house is alarmed; we are utterly undone! Mr. Chaucer; you will lose your mistress, I shall lose my

my service, and my Lady will lose her reputation.—
What shall we do? Where will you hide yourself?

Chau. Lookye, Mrs. *Busse*, tho' we have unhappily involved ourselves in this difficulty, we will not give up the cause.—A good steady assurance may still carry on the deceit--For my part, I'll play the Apparition in my *Exit*, and vanish—Do you try for once, whether a Woman can feign fear as well as sorrow,—Look astonished, and say you neither saw nor heard any thing, but observed the candle to burn blue, and smelt brimstone most intolerably.—Superstition, my dear, is very credulous. [*Exit* Chaucer.

Enter Myrtilia and Alison.

Myrt. Oh! dear Madam, I was so extremely frightened.—Your good nature, I hope, will excuse this disturbance.

Alif. What is the matter Precious? has Love committed burglary, and broke into thy chamber?—Ah rogue!—He is a sly young thief, and very seldom comes honestly by his possessions.

Myrt. Hold—ah!—there he is!

Alif. What—where, where is he?

Myrt. I beg your pardon, Madam.—It hath made so deep an impression on me, that Fancy recalls my fears.

Alif. Do you see now, my dear? these are some of the scare-crows that attend virginity; just my case when I was a maid, as I hope for a help-mate! Why, I lived upon Fancy, and my whole life was made up of inconsistencies. I sighed for I could not tell what, was wondrous fanciful in my dreams, and was not a little whimsical too when I was awake.

Bus. Madam!

Myrt. Where do you run?—Where are you? Why do you leave me?—There is more vexation with these creatures—I vow, 'tis intolerable.

Bus.

Bus. I imagined, by your Ladyship's looks, that you was taken with an hysteric fit, or surpris'd by the vapours——but when I heard you shriek so lamentably——bless me!——I thought I should have sunk in the place.

Myrt. You saw him, I suppose, *Busie*.

Bus. What, Madam?

Myrt. The apparition.

Bus. I neither saw nor heard any thing——but was frightened to that degree.----

Myrt. 'Tis mighty strange.

Bus. The candle, I perceived, appeared more than ordinarily bluish, and I was almost suffocated with brimstone.

Alis. The very downright symptoms of a spirit!——A spirit as certainly attacks the nostrils with the fumes of sulphur, as a beau with a digestion of a civet.——I think I do smell it,——Yes, yes, I do smell it.

Myrt. You seem to be frightened.

Alis. Frightened! quoth'a!——No, no, Madam,——I have, thanks to experience, seen spirits of all shapes, and all countries.——Why, a *Jerusalem* spirit is no more like an *English* spirit, than a Hog is like a Rhinoceros.——I have been witness of all the devil's frolics——Adad! to my certain knowledge, he makes nothing of unfurnishing a kitchen to entertain himself with a country-dance of dishes and platters; many be the times and often, he has rattled my curtains, and made the bed shake under me, when I have not had the comfort of a bedfellow; many a dark night have I seen the headless horse, and have had the honour to converse with the Queen of the Fairies. [*Looking towards the table.*] Hah, hah, Damsel! Cake and a Bottle!——Heyday!——And St. *Agnes's* night too!——Are you thereabouts, Girl!——'Twas a Ghost I perceive of your own raising, my dear, Ha, ha, ha!

Myrt. Your contradicting my former fortune. Madam, drew me in to commit this new piece of folly.

Alif. Come, honey,——here is his health,——with all my heart.

The maiden and the batchelor,
Pardie!——are simple elves,
And 'till they grow to man and wife,
Know nothing of themselves.

Then since we're each others by nature design'd
Let's unite, and our knowledge improve;
Here's a health to the lafs that is paffively kind,
And the youth that is active in love. [*Drinks.*

—'Sheartlikins, Madam, the very expectation has embellished your physiognomy; then what may we not hope from the poffeffions?—Tell me now, honey, did not his appearance make the blood shoot through your veins, and tickle your heart's root?

Myrt. The Gentleman, I confefs ingenuoufly, is the moft my averfion of all the whole fex; and I cannot imagine how the fellow can have the impudence to make his applications fo much above his condition.

Buf. The Gentleman, Madam, may, perhaps, balance thofe defects by fome other extraordinary qualities.

Myrt. I tell you, I hate the fellow mortally——This impertinence does not become you, miftrefs Pert.

Alif. Juft the quaint whim of the whole fex, by *St. Thomas of Kent.*——always to reject the thing that offers itfelf, and be ever hankering after and craving for the thing that is denied them.---

Myrt. Sure I am deltined to misfortune,——why had I not retired, and never revived this tormenting fellow in my imagination?

Alif. Why, what are your objections now, chicken: Is he old, forfooth?

Myrt. No.

Alif.

Alif. Then have at him, i'faith, my sweeting.----- Youth is a fauce that will make almost any husband go down.----- Ah *Benedicite!* Youth----- Golden days, and love in abundance;-----the spring of life, and *Cupid's* harvest!-----Here is a constitution, Madam, that wears like the never-fading laurel, that even flourishes in the very winter of age.-----On my conscience, 'tis very hard that you should not know the true uses of youth, 'till 'tis out of your power to enjoy it.

Myrt. Do you believe, Madam, that I must inevitably submit myself to this fortune?

Alif. Here are two husbands you see. [*Looking on her hand.*] Marry to-night-----make haste and love this same to death, to make room for the second.-----Come, come, child, he is handsome that handsome does, and there is no judging of a husband without trial.-----We can never know a horse's paces by his shapes.

Myrt. But perhaps my fancy may have imposed upon me, and this whole scene may be all delusion.

Alif. Try the trick over again, Madam,-----a second view of him, I suppose would convince you,-----here is in the inn one of the most expert, cunning men that ever drew circle.-----Ah! he is a most rare fellow for consulting the planets.-----Look ye, Bird, if you find him of the same opinion, you must even stick by the bargain, I think, and marry as soon as you can.

Myrt. I'll follow your advice, Madam.-----In the morning consult the Doctor, and take measures accordingly. [*Exeunt Myrtilla, Busie and Alifon.*]

S C E N E *The Hall.*

Enter Doggrell, to him enter Alifon.

Alif. Ha, ha! Old *Crambo!*-----the Lady is thine own, Boy, i'faith.

N 2

Dog.

Dog. With what air did she receive the sonnet, Madam? — Did you mark the rise and fall of her passions at every pause? For I may without vanity affirm, that I have a world of the *Tendresse* in my performances.

Alif. 'Slidikins! She received it, my lad, with all the ecstacy that a criminal receives a reprieve with. — Bless us all, had you but seen her, man; — why 'twas a perfect charm. — The very first couplet made love twinkle in her eyes, the next gave her a languishing air, — but as she read on, she was in a downright rapture. — As I hope for indulgence, I never knew a poet repeat his own verses with more admiration than she expressed at every line.

Dog. Did not her passion, Madam, excite her curiosity, and draw her in to ask some questions relating to my person or condition?

Alif. Since we have made this breach in her heart, my lad, there is now no fear of gaining the citadel. — Come, come! A woman's love is not so easily quenched neither. — 'Slidikins, the poet knew our temper to a hair, that said —

Women's love is like wild-fire;

The more it burneth, the more it doth desire.

Dog. But every little circumstance adds to a lover's satisfaction. — Did she ask no questions at all, Madam?

Alif. Ah rogue! Didst thou but know all, thou wouldst envy thy own sonnet. — As soon as she had read it, she lifted up her eyes in admiration, clapped it close to her precious lips — and — kissed it — thus — [*Kisses him.*] Again, and again, as eagerly, I warrant you. — Out! and alas, when I was of her years, I could love too by the force of imagination.

Dog. An old woman's kisses, to my taste, are like the embraces of a drunkard. [*Aside.*] But did not her Ladyship request my name or character? Or was she only

only in love with the compliment without examining into the author of it?

Alif. Why, she asked at least a hundred questions in a breath, and I told her——ah *Benedicite!* what did I not tell her?——Ods' my life! I was almost in love with my own description.---I said your shape was of a most curious turn——

Dog. You are mighty obliging, Madam.

Alif. That the vivacity of your wit sparkled in your eyes

Dog. You were too liberal, Madam, in my commendation.

Alif. That your good-nature extended to all mankind but the wits——upon whom, as you are one of the fraternity, you are obliged to exercise your spleen.

Dog. Most extremely complaisant, Madam,——a mighty fine *encomium*, I vow.——But did not you heighten my character, Madam, with an account of my family, which, modestly speaking, is of as great antiquity as the best quality in the universe.

Alif. 'Slid, I told her every thing. But harkye, young Madrigal, let us see, I pray you, how do you mean to carry on your approaches now?——Come, come, Lad, your youth with my experience will go a great way.

Dog. The quality, Madam, claim just distance and *decorum*, and a courtship in form.——I'll approach her with veneration, and lay my heart at her feet with the profoundest submission.

Alif. Wrong! All wrong, Youngster——Why, a Lady will hold out a regular courtship, purely upon a puntilio of honour.——'Sdiggers, one of her temper, like a widow, must be carryed by storm.——Never stand upon decency and cringes, Boy! pour a volley of love at once upon her Ladyship at the first onset.——And, my life for the matter, she will soon come to capitulation.

Dog. But her Ladyship, perhaps, from so rash an attempt will be apt to conclude, that for want of Good

Sense, I was forced in the vulgar way of the world to call in Impudence to my assistance.

Alif. Ah Boy! There is not so winning a card to be played as Assurance.—'Sheartlikins, a young fellow with this rhetoric will make a palpable absurdity pass among the females for a current piece of wit, will convert ill manners into a jest, and laugh downright rudeness into a piece of gallantry.

Dog. But, Madam, may I be so happy as to hope for an interview, will her Ladyship condescend to afford me the sweet melody of her conversation?—But, I fear, my natural bashfulness, Madam——

Alif. Pish! A fig for bashfulness, say I.---Raise your courage with a glass of wine, my Lad,---This secret hour of the night favours you.-----Lady *Myrtilla* will expect you here this instant.-----Go, Boy, brighten thy understanding, and return with vigour to the place of assignation.

Dog. May my love, Madam, be ship-wreck'd on the quicksands of inconstancy, if I know how to return this obligation.

Alif. I vow, Mr. *D'Ogrelle*, you are a wonderful pretty Gentleman.

Dog. You betray your judgement mightily, Madam,-----Ha! ha! ha!

Alif. *Courage!* then, my young hero.---Come, come, my presence shall never spoil your proceedings in your amour-----I'll leave you together.

Dog. I'll retire for a moment or two, to whet the edge of my wit with your prescription, Madam, and just study a few fine things to open the conference. Madam, your civilities extend beyond measure. I am your most obedient, humble servant. [*Exeunt severally.*

Enter Chaucer and Busie.

Chau. Well, my pretty rogue, and what says Lady *Myrtilla*?

Bus. She hates you.

Chau.

Chau. Does she so? Why then, I think, she must even fling herself into matrimony, like the ladies that marry for a jointure, and run the risque of loving ——— Well, my little engineer, you must direct my approaches, who best know the weakest part of the fortrefs.

Buf. She interprets the whole affair most maliciously, and that which we would have her believe the will of the fates, she throws wholly upon the strength of her imagination. She distrusts her own senses, and hath prevailed with herself to believe, that the whole scene was mere delusion.

Chau. Pox on it! why was I such a fool as to be in love? But, Mrs. *Busie*, is she positively resolved against me?

Buf. I thought you were too well acquainted with our sex, to dread a woman's resolutions, and especially in love affairs.—However, Sir, we are not yet quite desperate.—My Lady was informed of a fortune-teller now in the inn, whom she fully designs to consult in the morning, and if she can suit his description to your person, 'tis my opinion, you may still be the happy man.

Chau. Say'st thou so, my dear Girl,---Then, faith, it shall go hard but I'll be beforehand with her, and make my appearance once again without the help of magic.

Buf. I vow, and protest, Sir, my Lady's love is a mere false appetite; she seems as if she always had a good stomach, yet will never fall to, when there is a good dish set before her.—Make but Doctor *Astrolabe* your friend, Mr. *Chaucer*, and you may assure yourself of my Ladys compliance.

Chau. Well, my Dear, I thank thee for all thy good offices, and wish thee a good night. [*Kisses her.*]

Buf. Oh, fie, Sir!---I shall rob my Lady---ha! ha! ha! ——— of her property.

Chau.

Chau. I only stay my stomach, Child, since Lady *Myrtilla* has thought fit to defer the entertainment.---Good night, my Dear. [Exeunt severally.

Enter Alifon in a Nun's Habit, she lifts up her Veil, and walks about the Stage.

Alif. What is bred in the bone, I find, will never be out of the flesh——*Alack! and well-a-day!*——*that ever love was sin.*——Say I.——Inclination, I perceive, does not only float in youthful veins.——A fine world, truly! to banter us out of the comforts of life, and persuade us out of the most pleasing of our senses! no i'fackins, I shall not, at this time of day, let the world be judges of my constitution, which in troth has worn out two brace and a half of brave jolly husbands already;——yet I shall dare venture on t'other matrimonial voyage——But hold! I must now suit my conversation to the formality of my habit.

Enter Doggrell.

Dog. Fair Lady, shew yourself a generous conqueror; and since I am taken captive by your charms, and and bound in the golden chains of your beauty, throw me not into the dungeon of disdain, but rather confine me in the pleasing mansions of your bosom; where my heart will glory in its captivity, and despise the less substantial joys of liberty.

Alif. These fine things might ensnare a heart disposed to love, but you are sensible, Sir, I have already devoted mine to another service.——You men of wit are general lovers of the whole sex, and think to try the strength of every Lady's resolutions at the small expence of a sonnet.——Come, Sir,——I know Poets and Knights-Errant can never subsist without a Mistress——for love is as well a spur to wit as to valour.——

Dog.

Dog. You are the centre of my love, Madam, which like my poetry is founded on the basis of eternity ; we are, it must be acknowledged, Madam, like Knights-Errant, devoted to the service of the fair, but still, like them, we have but one peerless beauty, one bright star of Angelical virtue, where we pay adoration.—— A more alert behaviour is the only lure to make her stoop to my addresses. [*Aside.*] Let me die, Madam, if I don't think you a very pretty creature.

Alif. Do you so, Sir?

Dog. Come, Madam, let this malicious cloud no longer eclipse the sun-shine of your beauty——
[*Offers to lift up her veil.*] Ah those eyes!

Alif. Desist, I beg you ; these liberties do not become you, Sir.

Dog. I vow and protest, Madam, you are most extremely beautiful——Lookye, Madam,——I quarter as many coats as any Gentleman whatever : My estate is by no means despicable. As for my person, and other intrinsic merits, I leave them to the mercy of your Ladyship's judgment.

Alif. I must confess, I entertain a good opinion of you, Sir, and think you very deserving.

Dog. Your Ladyship does me too much honour—— But what think you, Madam,——could you like me for a husband ?

Alif. A very blunt question !

Dog. But a very sincere one Madam.

Alif. You railly very severely, Sir.

Dog. No, I vow and protest, Madam,——by these dear yielding lips, I swear, [*Kisses her.*] by your bright eyes,——that odoriferous balmy breath, and by the bloom that smiles upon your cheeks, by those white teeth, that grace your pretty mouth, like rows of Oriental pearl.——

Alif. Let me die, if I have ever a one in my head, but what I am obliged to the operator for——Ah

Imagi-

Imagination!——True is the Proverb i'fackins——

'All cats are grey, when light is away.' [Aside.

Dog. Nay, by all your charms, I swear, I'll dedicate myself entirely to your service, will sacrifice my liberty to matrimony, and——

Alif. Hold, Sir——make no farther protestations——perform what you have already promised, and no Lady whose thoughts are bent that way can dislike you for a husband.

Dog. Nay, even my Muse Madam, shall be subservient to your commands.——I'll turn my panegyric into satyr; and your resentment shall have the pleasure to see all those Ladies lampooned, that I formerly celebrated.

Alif. We women, Sir, naturally fly to extremes——but methinks from a Nunnery to a husband is too great a transition——but I must beg your pardon: It grows late.

Dog. Will your Ladyship grant me the honour of your hand; and shall I be so happy, Madam, as to conduct you to your apartment?

Alif. I fear you will be rude, Sir; and how shall I, that dare not trust myself abroad in the world, with safety venture a young handsome Gentleman in my bed-chamber?

Dog. You may confide in my behaviour, Madam, I shall presume to take no liberties but what will be agreeable.

Alif. Beauty, like colour, owes itself to light;
For youth and age best equal charms by
night;
And we can still please ev'ry sense——but
sight.

[Exeunt; Doggrell leading Alifon.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

SCENE *Doctor Astrolabe's Chamber.**Enter Chaucer to Astrolabe.*

ASTROLABE.

I Beg, Sir, you would not intrude upon my studies ; I am at present unravelling a great Lady's nativity ; and cannot, as yet, attend your questions.

Chau. My affair, Sir, requires dispatch——lookye, Doctor, here are three broad pieces for you, I suppose these will disentangle you a moment or two.

Ast. I am willing to oblige as far as lies in the circumference of my power, and especially a person that appears and speaks so much like a Gentleman as yourself——Propose your question, and if it lies within the compass of lawful art.——

Chau. My case, Doctor is not in the common road. I do not want to be assured of the happiness of life, or the health of an absent friend ; I neither desire to have a thief described, nor a philtre for a Mistress :——'Tis true, I have lost a heart, but the marks of the dear thief are too strongly imprinted on it already.

Ast. I perceive, Sir, that the design of your visit is purely to vilify the Science, and to cast aspersions on the honourable professors.

Chau. You mistake me,——lookye, Sir, to make you a true judge of my affair, I ought to acquaint you, that I am in love with a Lady that is extremely superstitious, who having heard of your fame, designs to
consult

consult you this morning in relation to her marriage.— Now, that we may play the surest card, I shall only desire the favour of your habit, and the convenience of your apartment, to treat with her in my own person.

Ast. This would be merely prostituting the Science.— But to shew you, Sir, that my function does not straiten my civilities, upon promise of secrecy; I shall comply with your demands.

Chau. You may safely repose in me, Sir, [*Gives him Gold.*] I shall not disparage the Science, I have all the twelve signs by heart; my memory is pretty well stocked with terms of art, and I can talk unintelligibly.

Ast. You are pleased to make free with the profession, Sir——— This, Sir, is my Hieroglyphical Cap; [*Puts his cap on Chaucer's head.*] and this, Sir, is the mystical Wand——— [*Gives Chaucer his Wand.*] under covert of these Necromantic Vestments, you may approach the fair without the least danger of a discovery. [*Chaucer puts on Astrolabe's Habit.*]

Chau. But, pox on't, though, Doctor, methinks I look a little too young for a Conjuror; a beard and a pair of whiskers would undoubtedly give a good magical air to my countenance, and add a kind of awful solemnity to my pronounciation.—— Come, pr'ythee Doctor, you cannot sure be without such a convenience.

Ast. Why, Sir, that's true, Sir——lookye, Sir,—— you have given me your honour to act with me like a gentleman; and rather than you shall be at a loss for so necessary an ornament, I will divest my own chin of its longevity, [*Takes off his beard.*] I am a young fellow you see, Sir, that have made use of my fortune, and run myself head and ears in debt: I was forced to take up this way of livelihood, to endeavour to retrieve my condition, and screen myself from the Bailiffs. If I can serve you in any other respect, you may command me, but for the present give me leave to attend you in
this

this masquerade, as your servant; perhaps I may be necessary.

Chau. So much frankness and good nature surprize me.

Ast. I considered that judicial Astrology, as the world goes, was at best but an amusement, and set up at a small expence——that there was nothing requisite to give it credit; but a solemn unintelligible jargon, and an awful appearance.

Cha. Appearance, Sir, bears away the bell, almost in every thing——What composes, a fine Gentleman? but dress.——A Scholar is owing to superficial terms; the Lawyer amuses you with a medley of law-terms and a face of importance——and if you go to the precise Teacher, 'tis ten to one but you will find all his religion lie in his cloak and band.

Ast. To your post, Sir; the Lady appears.

Enter Myrtila and Busie.

Myrt. Is your name Doctor *Astrolabe*, Sir?

Chau. Yes, Madam my name is——Doc-tor *Astro-labe*.——*Ger-ma-ny* has the honour of my birth, and *Scorpio* was ascendant at my nativity.——I am, Madam,——not only the seventh Son, but the Son of the seventh Son.——The occult Sciences have been my study from the cradle;——I have, my Lady,——by the way, you see I can give you a sketch of my proficiency,——and shew you that I am not unacquainted with your quality.

Busie. As I live, the Doctor is in the right of it.

Myrt. Pray, cease your impertinence, and be silent.

Chau. I have, as I was saying, made practicable, and by great labour and application, brought to perfection the Green and Hermetical Dragon;——'Twas owing to my indefatigable searches, that the Female Fern-Seed was brought to light.——And if I can rely on some of the most plain *Phænomena* of Art, the Philo-
 Vol. III. O sopher's

sopher's Stone will not lie long undiscovered. ———
 My head, Madam, is a mere *Microcosm*, ——— or,
 if you please, like the concave of the Heavens, lined
 with Planets, and powdered with the Constellations—
 Perhaps, before I fall directly on the matter in hand,
 it will not be unnecessary to acquaint you with some of
 the Sciences that lie within the circle of my profession.
Astrology, Astronomy, Physics, Metaphysics, Palmistry, Chi-
romancy, Physiognomy, Botany, Optics, Catoptrics, Diop-
trics, Necromancy, Divination, and Algebra.—With se-
 veral others, which at this time would be too tedious
 to recount. ——— Your business, Madam, is inscribed
 in your forehead; and the fates decree you happiness.
 ——— though I must acquaint you, you seem to embrace
 it with reluctance.

Myrt. I suppose, Doctor, since you say you are ac-
 quainted with my quality, ——— you are no stranger
 to my name.

Chau. Your name, Madam, ——— if my art fails me
 not, ——— Let me see ——— begins ——— ay ——— its
 first letter is an ——— M ——— and a Y seems to me
 to be the following vowel, ——— If you will have
 me proceed, I will go quite through all the three syllab-
 les of it.

Busie. *Myr-till-a* [*Spelling.*] just three syllables, and
 no more, ——— that is certain.

Myr. Let not your tongue, I charge you, blab thus
 out of season. [*To Busie.*] But Doctor, my business, I
 pray you?

Chau. Your business, Madam, ——— as the Celestial
 Globe informs me, lies in *Gemini*, ——— that is to say,
 the house of marriage.

Myrt. It may be so, Sir ——— Then I am married, I
 presume Doctor ———

Chau. No, Madam, ——— Nor would be so, if your
 own inclinations took place. ——— The Gentleman,
 that at this time seems your aversion ——— will ———
 make you happy.

Bus.

Bisf. Nay, now 'tis a plain case.

Myrt. Will you never have done with your tittle-tattle? [*To Bufile.*] Has the Gentleman, I pray, Doctor, that promises so much happiness ever made his application to me?

Chau. You beheld him,——even with your own eyes,——last night at an unseasonable hour,——and it will not be long——many hours, I mean, 'till he honours himself with another visit.——Credit my prognostications,——and use him respectfully,——Hate, I find is not his portion--——Love, in the end will turn the balance.

Enter Alifon.

Ast. Pray woman, don't be so troublesome;—— I tell you the Doctor is engaged,—and cannot attend your business at present.

Ali. O my conscience, great folks keep a cargo of impertinent servants about them, to defend them from visitants.——If one's business leads one to dance attendance after quality, our message, forsooth, must be delivered at the door-passage, and there, like a watch-word through a camp, it must fly through at least half a dozen skips before it can reach my Lord's ears.——And now, forsooth, the world is come to a fine pass truly, that we must make application to the Conjuror's Imp, in our way to the Conjuror.

Chau. Let the Woman have her way——

Ali. Why, how now, Doctor?—Do not you remember your old acquaintance?—Out! and alas!—I believe I am mistaken,—you are none of Doctor *Astrolabe*, I perceive.

Chau. Yes, Madam, I am Doctor *Astrolabe*—the *Camelion*, throughout all his colours, still retains the name of a *Camelion*, and so am I myself, Madam, the same, throughout all my *Metamorphoses*.—We always,

Madam, suit our shape to the nature of the study we are intent upon.

Ali. Oh, I crave your mercy, good Doctor.—— Well Madam, has the Doctor satisfied your curiosity?

Chau. That your Ladyship may be ascertained that I do not deal in uncertainties, I can give you ocular demonstration of my infallibility.——The looking-glass you see there, is my Necromantic mirror,——wherein I represent past, present, and to come.——A thief starts up in the twinkling of an eye;——And a Lady may here behold her lover's picture without being obliged to the Painter.——What say you, Madam? would you command my art to this further operation?

Alif. 'Sdiggers, a pretty question for a Conjuror indeed!——raise him in your glass, Doctor, as soon as you please, I'll warrant you, she will be beforehand with you in her imagination.

Myrt. I presume, Sir, there is no danger in the operation.

Chau. None,——Not in the least, Madam.——I must request the absence of those Ladies.——The affair only relates to you, Madam.

Alif. Nay,——prithee Doctor.

Chau. Lookye, Ladies, we can upon no account run counter to the established method of art.

Alif. Adad, I perceive that Conjurers, as well as Physicians and Confessors, love to have the Ladies under private examination.——Good luck attend you, my dear.

Bus. May every thing succeed according to your Ladyship's wishes. [Ex. Alison and. Bushe.

Chau. Situate yourself, my Lady, exactly in this point of view,——In the centre of the circle that I now describe——Nor once presume to turn your head either to the right or left.——I am afraid I shall have a difficult task to keep a pretty Lady from giving herself airs, when there is a looking-glass in view.——Be cautious and fear nothing.

Thrice

Thrice I wave my wand around,
 And consecrate this spot of ground.
Zutphin, and *Zephin*,—ye that reign
 Far beyond the Northern Main.
 Quickly, quickly take your flight,
 And leave the dark Abyfs of night;
 Hither, hither, gently fly,
 Ye milder spirits of the sky:
 Let now my Science be your care,
 And bring her lover to the fair.

[He puts off the Conjuror's Cap and Beard, and puts on his Hat, &c. and peeps over her Shoulder, as she looks in the Glass,

Myrt. Hah!

Chau. Hold, hold, Madam!—Stand firm; guard your footsteps, and let the center be still covered with the soles of female feet.

Swiftly, swiftly haste away,
 And my inverted Wand obey:
 Let no hurly-burly rise;
 Nor storms the face of Heav'n disguise;
 Let the winds in silence lie,
 Nor dreadful lightnings streak the sky;
 Let thunder sleep, and calmness reign,
 In fire, in air, in earth, and main,
 Lightly skim the tops of mountains,
 Nor blast the corn, nor taint the fountains,
 Swiftly, swiftly, haste away,
 And my inverted Wand obey.

[He puts on his disguise again.]

The charm is finished,—Well, Madam, has my art convinced your incredulity?

Myrt. Is matrimony then to be inflicted on me as a penance, and am I unfortunate by necessity?

Chau. Believe me, Madam, so many hours as you defend yourself from marriage, so many happy ones you strike out of the register of life—Your love, I foresee, as in common cases, is not to be trifled away in a tedious courtship; but is reserved, as an inexhaustible treasure, to sweeten the matrimonial condition.

Myrt. The gentleman, I must confess, has a world of valuable qualifications; and since, I find I must—I shall endeavour, in his next application, to treat him with more humanity.

Chau. Your resolution, I assure you, is founded on prudence, and established on wisdom: Cherish the first motives of his love, and lay hold on *Hymen's* kind invitation.—The gentleman I pronounce very deserving—His heart, I foresee, is the seat of constancy, and his love is as lasting as honourable.

Myrt. Well, Sir, I believe I shall shew that I entertain a good opinion of the Doctor, by submitting myself to his prescriptions. [Exit Myrt.]

Ast. Well, Sir, they are at last all very fairly dismissed.—Your adventure, Sir, is accompanied with the utmost of my good wishes.

Chau. I am at a loss to make you returns for so much good nature.—For this fee, Sir you are obliged to the Lady's superstition, [*Gives him what he had before received of Myrtilla.*] and I hope my success will soon put it in my power, some way or other, to retrieve your fortune. [Exeunt.]

S C E N E The HALL.

Enter Franklyn, Doggrell, and Doublechin.

Frank. Why, *Frank*, man, I thought a person of thy reading had known, that a young, giddy girl will make a world of doubles, to lead her lover into a fault.
—An

—An inconsiderate gipsy!—What throw dirt upon her ancestors!

Dog. Do not, Sir, without farther evidence, entertain the suggestions of your jealousy, nor censure the Lady of an indiscretion which had its birth in your own fancy.

Frank. Give me leave to tell you, *Frank*, I know,—and you shall receive immediate satisfaction from her own recantation.

Dog. An affair requires my attendance for a moment or two.—I must beg your pardon, Gentlemen.

[*Exit Doggrell.*]

Doub. Oh sleep, sleep!—The Chamberlain thought fit last night to conduct me over the stable; and what, with the noise of the horses, and the carriers bawling conversation, I was forced, very much against the grain, to employ the whole night in meditation.

Frank. Poor father, I pity you.—But let us see you now deny yourself a nap, by way of mortification. Watching is enough to founder your devotion, that is certain; for eating, drinking, and sleeping, are the three main props of the order,—But lookye father, d'ye see, the case stands thus now; —my daughter *Florry* does not lay *Frank's* love to heart, so much as she should do.

Doub. Ay, it may be so.

[*Nodding.*]

Frank. Nay, but father, let us give nature a fillip with t'other toast and sack—Ha, ha! old *Dominic*,—what say you, father, would not a bottle, or a female confession, draw your attention now?—Now you must know, I came to this conclusion.—

Doub. Very good.—

[*Nodding.*]

Frank. To this conclusion—I say.

[*Bawls in his ear,*

Doub. Yes, yes, Sir, I understand the conclusion, Sir.

Frank. Now has his reverencial drowsiness dreamed over

over all my thoughts, and waked just at the conclusion of them.—See! hoy there! [Bawls.

Doub. Well Sir, well Sir,—I hear you—you may go on.

Frank. My *Florry*, as I was saying, not setting a true value on *Frank's* love, has raised this scandal on her great grandfather of her own invention, purely to disgust *Frank* in his proceedings.

Doub. To disgust *Frank* in his proceedings.——
Right, you say well, I hear you well enough,—proceed Sir.

Frank. Now granting this, Sir,—though we allow the fellow stole her last night, we may with good reason conclude she was an accomplice in the theft.

Doub. Yes, An accomplice in the theft.—I mind you Sir,—well, and what then?

Frank. Now, what would you advise me to do in this case?—Why, lookye, Sir, I have considered, that while the ceremony of Matrimony is in agitation, the man and wife must of necessity be of one mind. Now, I would have you go preach up obedience to my daughter; whilst I new-model *Frank* for a husband: and just as we have drawn them both in for their consent, you shall nick them slapdash with the ceremony.

Doub. Slapdash with the ceremony——Yes, Sir,——very well,——then I am, it seems, to exhort her to filial duty.

Frank. Right, father!——That was spoken now like a man with both eyes open.

Doub. You may rely on my pious endeavours, Sir.

Frank. This key, father is the only security I have of her duty——and this——putting confidence in the strength of your virtue,——I deliver into your possession.
[Exeunt severally.

Enter

Enter Myrtilia and Busie.

Myrt. The Doctor's mirrour has made so strange an impression on me, that I cannot so much as endeavour to remove the fellow from my thoughts :——I, this time, discovered something so mightily agreeable in him as struck me insensibly.——I vow, *Busie*, my temper, on a sudden, is most unaccountably changed ; ——Dress again begins to be my care, and the thoughts of a Convent are grown perfectly distastful ——Do these ribbands, *Busie*, suit my complexion ?

Bus. They are most wonderfully becoming, Madam.

Myrt. I begin to be sensible that those young Ladies, who protect their modesty in a Nunnery, lay themselves extremely open to censure, and betray their secret inclinations. They deny themselves the conversation of mankind, just as a young fellow that is infected with play shuns a Gaming-house ; upon no other account, but because they are conscious they cannot resist the temptation. ——Is Mr. *Chaucer*, d'ye hear, *Busie*, returned from his travels ?

Bus. Since I found him not worth your Ladyship's regard, I never thought him worth my enquiry. ——But I some time since was accidentally informed, that he was expected ; ——Is Mr. *Chaucer* then the happy man at last, Madam, to whom we are obliged for this deliverance ?

Myrt. The Doctor just now promised that he would make his addressee in person ; ——and, if this third circumstance should agree with the last night's and this morning's experiment, I fear my resolution would not be strong enough to deny him ; ——I vow, I cannot tell what ails me, ——methinks, he grows more and more agreeable insensibly. ——Hah !

Enter

Enter Chaucer.

Chau. Sure I dream still;—or has fortune thrown me at once on all my hopes?—May I presume, Madam, to give credit to my eyes, and call your name—
Myrtilla. [Sighs.]

Myrt. You are not deceived, Mr. *Chaucer*.

Chau. Then I must own myself your Ladyship's convert; and am now convinced that the presages of dreams are not to be ridiculed.——I last night, Madam, had the honour to see you; nor did my dreams deny me admission to your person;—I spoke, I begged, I intreated:——You still were silent,——I afterwards aspired to touch your hand, you hastily snatched it from me.——But then, Madam, the morning entertained me with a more agreeable dream;

——methought you seemed with a kind smile to call me to you;——at the charming voice I awaked in extasie,——and morning dreams, I learned from your Ladyship's observation, are most to be relied upon.

Myrt. I confess, I am mightily surpris'd to see you at this juncture.——Destiny, I think, seems to throw you in my way, in spite of my inclinations.——As you are a stranger, Sir, you now claim my civility; and I give you leave to credit your morning's amusement.

Chau. 'Tis love, Madam, that hath blessed me with this interview, and I must unload my heart, and confess my passion, though I run the risque of your displeasure.

Myrt. Your passion certainly must be very violent, that could support itself under so long an absence.——As often as a traveller changes his climate, he lets out his heart to a new mistress; and you must think me a very credulous creature to persuade myself you have been constant all this time.

Chau.

Chau. Faith, Madam, I don't think that either sex ought to value themselves much upon that quality.—— But for constancy, as it passes at present, my heart is a *Non-pareille*;——and as well turned for a husband as any reasonable woman can require.

Myrt. Now, granting I should put such confidence in you, Sir,——Really you have surprised me in a mighty good humour;——you must know, Sir, the whim led me to consult a fortune-teller this morning, who has extremely diverted me.

Chau. I am glad to find, Madam, you were so agreeably entertained.

Myrt. The doctor has laid some obligations on you, Sir, and appeared very zealous in your interest, I'll assure you: He engaged for your constancy, promised me happiness, and a world of fine things; if I thought convenient to follow his prescriptions.---Ha! ha! ha!

Chau. My passion, Madam, is too serious an affair to be trifled withal——If delay separates us once again---

Mrt. Why——I hope, Sir, you are not about making another *Tour*.

Chau. I don't know, Madam.——Just as inclination leads me;——My passions, I must confess, are a little predominant; and if they should command me to *France* or *Italy* again: I am afraid my good-nature would not be able to deny them——And then, Madam, I'll warrant, I shall be compared to the winds that made me dance over the waves; I shall be as faithless as the sea, and as unmerciful as the billows. When, in reality, my sails were only filled with the gales of your ladyship's inconstancy.

Myrt. Well, Sir.——to deal then ingenuously with you;——I would advise you to cast anchor: And if the winds are lodged in my power, you shall wait long enough 'till I oblige you with a fair gale.

Chau. And will your ladyship at last condescend to make me happy?

Myrt.

Myrt. The Fates, it seems, design it so, Sir: Ha! ha! ha!

Enter Doggrell.

Dog. Fair Lady, I beg your pardon——Mr. *Chaucer*, a word with you.

Chau. Nay, pr'ythee,——you see I am engaged——I hope, your civility, Sir, will not break in upon a Lady's private conversation.

Dog. I presume, the Lady will indulge me for a moment, since it is an affair of consequence.——Madam, shall I beg the honour to deprive Mr. *Chaucer* of a minute or two of your most agreeable conversation?

Myrt. The Gentleman is at his own liberty, Sir——A formal coxcomb! [*Aside.*

Chau. Some other time, Sir, I will wait on you; an opportunity with the ladies must never be neglected——Sir, I am your humble servant——Well——Madam——

Dog. The Lady's good-nature will excuse my rudeness, Sir.

Chau. Pox on it!——these fellows stick as close to a man as a cast-mistress; there is no dismissing them without present satisfaction, [*Aside.*] Well——Sir——

Dog. I beg your pardon, Madam, for this small breach of decorum;——but I will return you Mr. *Chaucer* with all imaginable expedition——[*Exit.*

Myrt.] You must know, Sir,——that I last night ran through the whole exercise of love:——I was captivated, I courted, and won the fair;——Oh——the most charming angel!——then the wittiest creature, that ever flirted a fan! and the most engaging shape and mien!——mere imagination elevates me into an extasy.

Chau. Well, Sir,——and what is all this to me, I pray you?

Dog.

Dog. I beg your pardon, Sir, I meant you no affront.

Chau. To abridge your story——I suppose,——you are married.——

Dog. A secret, I know, Sir, is safely lodged in the cabinet of your discretion.——Yes, Sir,——the Lady immediately took fire——and, on the spot, treated me like a gentleman.——I married her last night upon honour; and now am going to give her personal security, and sign the lease for life.

Chau. Really, Sir, I am in no respect capable of keeping a secret of this nature; so, Sir, your humble servant.

Dog. Nay, pry'thee Mr. *Chaucer*——but I should first of all have acquainted you that she fell a victim to my poetry.——And now, Sir, to maintain my conquest, I have levied a Stanza or two to bring down upon her Ladyship, which I shall beg leave, Sir, to submit to the candour of your judgment.

Chau. Some other time, you may command me, Sir.

Dog. Now, Sir,——no, now,——dear Sir,——I long to have your sentiments on the Ode.——See, Sir,——'tis upon a fair Lady's making me happy. [*Gives him a paper.*] Your reading the lines, Sir, will do them a world of justice.

[*Chaucer reads carelessly.*]

STANZAS, upon a fair Lady making me happy.

Ye Gods! did *Jove* e'er taste such charms,
When prest in fair *Alcmene's* arms,

O ye immortal pow'rs!
For he in all his tripple night,
Did ne'er enjoy such soft delight,
As I in half a one of yours.

Very fine, Sir,——very fine.

[*Reading on.*]

Oh ecstasy! What---

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Dog.

Dog. Hold, hold, Sir! ——— Mark the harmony, Sir! ——— And the easy cadence that falls through the whole Stanza.

Ye Gods! did *Jove* e'er taste such charms,
When prest, &c.

[Repeats with affectation, and beats time,
while Chaucer appears very uneasy.

I defy the *Italian* to run more soft. ——— See, Sir, ——— The first hint is perfectly pindaric! ——— But observe, Sir, as most poets mount into sublimity at the close of a poem; I leave the common road, ——— and start into the heavens at the very first flight. ——— Ye Gods! ——— Now my breaking out into ——— O ye immortal Powers, brings the scene of action in view ——— And the poet seems to be at that instant clasped in the embraces of his charming fair one ——— Now mind the easy flowing softness of the following lines,

—— For he, in all his triple night, &c.

That *triple* is one of the most happy epithets ——— *Virgil* himself might not bluth to have been the author of it.

Chau. Such harmony, Sir, can never fail of chiming the lady into a second trance. ——— But the beauties lie so near the surface, that there is no room for a critic's discoveries. ——— So, Sir, your humble servant.

Dog. The next Stanza ——— I beseech you, dear Mr. Chaucer.

Chauc. But the incivility to the Lady, Sir.

Dog. Will give a Gentleman of your capacity an opportunity of exerting his wit.

Chau. In my own defence then!

[*Aside.*

Oh ecstasy! What wit can tell,
Those charms that lie beneath your veil
Those lightnings of your eye?
No longer then your beauty shroud,

Nor

Nor place the sun behind a cloud,
For ah! fair Nun, I faint, I die.

A Nun, Sir!

Dog. A secret, Sir, touched at one end flies through the whole, like a train of gun-powder.—You must know then, that there is a lady of quality, who, upon some disgust with the world, was about sheltering her virtue in a nunnery; I made my addresses to her, and vanquished her with as much ease as I write a couplet; —But lest the lady should take a whim to recede from her engagements, I, last night, took possession before the writings were signed.

Chau. Last night, Sir?

Dog. Yes, Sir.—She concealed her blushes with her veil; nor would consent to make me total y happy till the consummation.

Chau. Her virgin modesty, I find, would not permit her to sin, but under covert. How happy was this coxcomb's presence to frighten me from the snare.—The Muses then hereafter shall still be my mistress; nor shall one Lady pretend to engross what with good husbandry will oblige so many. [*Aside.*]

Dog. Let me die if he is not repeating my lines in a perfect rapture! See how good poetry strikes a man of genius. [*Aside.—He advances to Chaucer.*] But, Mr. Chaucer, pray what think you of the last Stanza? That admiration of her concealed beauties, shews wonderfully the vivacity of the poet's imagination.—Now for my fair Nun, Sir. You will excuse me, Mr. Chaucer, since you know the occasion.

Enter Myrtilia.

So, Sir, your most obedient humble servant. Fair Lady, yours most obediently. [*Exit Dog.*]

Myrt. The Gentleman, Sir, has entertained you with a mighty long conference; I am glad you were so well diverted --Poetry, I presume.

Chau. Yes, Madam, the Gentleman has received some favours from his mistress; and his gratitude, it seems, hath led him to express himself in rhyme.

Myrt. Love naturally flows into poetry. I admire, Sir, that your Muse was never so obliging as to throw away a few tender things upon the lady on whom you are so generous as to bestow your heart.

Chau. Really, Madam, I never write elegy; my Muse does not delight in sighs and complaints---Nor loves to bemoan absence and inconstancy.---Don't you think, Madam, that gentleman has a very happy talent of writing?

Myrt. Both the gentleman and his writings are strangers to me.---The Fates you see, Sir, have given you hopes; and suppose now I should confirm their decree, would not your Muse be so complaisant as to acknowledge the favour?

Chau. Methinks his lines have a peculiar softness in them; so easy, and so tender, that, like the *Sirens*, they at once charm and betray---They can disarm a lady's virtue, and lay her modesty asleep, while they keep her inclinations awake. Stop your ears, Madam, he is a dangerous fellow.

Myrt. The caution is useless, Sir, since I am entirely a stranger to the gentleman---but you see, I dare trust myself in the sound of your poetry, Sir,---If I should be captivated, I know you are generous enough to treat your prisoner with honour.

Chau. Excuse me, Madam, I am not disposed to write at present.

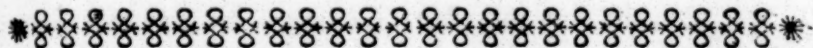
Myrt. *Turns from him*] *Busie!* What ails the fellow to treat me with so much indifference? His love is a mere ague, and the cold fit hath now seized on him---I'll again endeavour to hate him: And if I am decreed at last to sacrifice myself to one whose love dwindles into that cold term, Civility, I will only involve the latter scene of my life in matrimonial penitence.

[*Exeunt Myrt. and Busie.*

Chau.

Chau. I loved her, I must confess, while I believed her virtuous; but I will exert my reason, and disdain to make myself a husband to screen a woman's frailties from censure.---Love avaunt! and welcome Liberty.

Now blythe and debonnaire, I'll relish life,
Nor sour it with that lasting evil---Wife.
My love at random through the sex shall fly,
And treach'rous vows allure them to comply:
I'll artfully each tender fair subdue,
And, like themselves, for half an hour be true.



ACT V. SCENE I.

SCENE *the Hall.*

Enter Busie to Chaucer.

BUSIE.

OH, dear Mr. *Chaucer*, my Lady is retired in the most grievous fret---Go, go! I am perfectly ashamed of you!-----You a poet! And want assurance?

Chau. Lookye, my dear, to speak my sentiments freely: I would always have love and matrimony walk hand in hand; and Lady *Myrilla* shall have both the stars and my leave to dignify that Gentleman with the title of Husband whom she last night made happy with her person.

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Bus.

Bus. Then the riddle is at last explained.—Hath that coxcomb's folly boasted of favours from my Lady, and were you so easy of belief, to distrust her honour? His vanity, Sir, hath both imposed upon himself and you: For last night, missing my Lady's Nun's Habit—I found the *Wife of Bath's* laid in its room.—My curiosity prevailed with me to search her pockets, where I found this letter, which, I presume, will satisfy you to whom the Gentleman owed these mighty favours. [Gives him a Letter.]

Chau. His hand, and style, I'll swear.—

Bus. O' my conscience, I fear she will never be reconciled to you——You were as cold and unmannerly as a morose husband; and those symptoms in an humble servant, Mr. *Chaucer*, let me tell you, give a Lady too just occasion for resentment.

Chau. Scandal finds an easy passage to the heart; and what we fear we very readily believe.

Bus. See what a dance jealousy leads a man!——Beware of this same passion in matrimony, Sir;——For then it will be a plaguy troublesome companion.

Chau. This mistake then, I perceive, is purely owing to a gamesome frolic of the *Wife of Bath's*, who hath diverted herself at the expence of your Lady's honour.—Lookye, my dear, suppose now I could point you out a convenient husband,—would the present be agreeable?

Bus. Really, Sir, I have not vanity enough to set me out for a coquet.—Humble servants now-a-days are not to be trifled withal——And should I neglect a good offer, I fear the fate of an old maid would too late convince me of my folly.

Chau. Well!——What think you then, my dear, of Mr. *Doggrell* yourself?——He is a man of an estate, which you know, Child, is the best of sauce for so constant a dish as matrimony:——The *Wife of Bath* hath engaged him to give her nuptial security for her last night's favour;——He will immediately fly to the
habit

habit—Now if that is in your possession, make but yourself the Nun, and you may commence Wife as soon as you please.—The dark, or a veil, creates you as good a Lady as any in the universe.

Buf. Well! it pleases me wonderfully, indeed it does.—I'll about it instantly; for I have secured the old Lady from taking t'other trip in masquerade;—But now to your affair, Sir.—Go and throw yourself at my Lady's feet; touch again upon the string of love, while her passions are in a ferment, nor give her present resentment time to settle into a fixed aversion.—Hold, Sir!—Here she comes!—I must fly:—For I durst not be seen with you.

[*Exit.*

Enter Myrtilla.

Chau. I vow, Madam, you treated me barbarously.—Here I have been ever since in contemplation of your beauties—Wandering over your perfections, ransacking the skies for metaphors, and culling the goddesses for similes:—While you most maliciously withdrew the original, and left me to finish the picture purely by the height of imagination.

Myrt. Oh dear, Mr. *Chaucer*,—do—repeat me the verses, and you will oblige me infinitely.

Chau. Really, Madam, I have quite forgotten them.

Myrt. Nay, I long to hear them—The verses and the subject are, I suppose, both treated alike,—soon forgotten: I swear I shall never forgive you, if you will not indulge me in this particular.

Chau. Pox on it! I have brought myself into a fine dilemma.—Have I never a lucky thought about me?—Yes, faith,—this does.

[*Aside.*

I.

Daphne, a coy and foolish dame,
Flew from *Apollo's* charms,
Had he confess'd in verse his flame,
She'd flown into his arms.

II. When-

II.

Whenever *Orpheus* touch'd the lyre,
 Or sang melodious airs,
 He made the very stones admire,
 And tam'd the fiercest bears.

III.

Are ladies hearts more hard than stone,
 Are wolves and bears less fierce?
 Then, pr'ythee, nymph, no longer frown,
 But own the pow'r of verse.

Myrt. Mighty pretty! Wonderfully gallant!

Chau. Well, Madam, has poetry softened your passions? And will your love at last condescend to shake hands with destiny?—Consider, Madam, 'tis only in your power to delay it.

Myrt. It would be far more generous, I confess, to make love a present;—and methinks I would not wear out your love in expectation neither.——You have my leave, Sir, to continue your addresses.

Chau. Come, Madam, let your heart accompany your hand. [*Takes her by the hand.*] And double the value of the gift, by putting me in present possession.

Myrt. It would be in vain to be obstinate.

Chau. Let *Hymen* then, Madam, join our hands; let us be complaisant to the Fates for our fortune, and readily embrace the happiness the stars have allotted us.

Myrt. You see, Sir, I am not at my own disposal.

Chau. From this instant then I date my happiness.

Myrt. If it is decreed, Sir,——

Chau. Come on then, my charming fair——

Marriage, the chiefest good that mortals know,
 Doubles our joy, while it divides our woe:
 What anxious cares can then our bliss controul,
 When Heav'n assents, and Love unites each soul?

SCENE

S C E N E Florinda's Apartment.

Enter Doublechin to Florinda.

Doub. I come, by your father's orders, to inculcate into you—the doctrine of obedience.—Watching and cares!——and Sack, will most certainly wear out this constitution of mine,——Sleep—perhaps, Madam,—may weaken the force of my arguments.—But—though, Madam,——I am a little drowsy in shewing you your duty,——I hope, you will be vigilant in performing it——Mr. *Doggrell*, Madam,——has most excellent capacities—for an husband;——And I do not in the least question—but you have as excellent capacities for a wife.

Flor. Well, Sir,——my father's pleasure, pray?

Doub. In brief—Madam,—to be as short as possible——[*Nods.*]——Not to trouble you with circumlocutions.—[*Nods.*] But fall directly on the matter in hand—I vow, Madam, drowsiness has almost broke the thread of my story—Pray, Madam,—what is your will and pleasure, I beseech you?

Flor. To be informed of my father's commands, Sir.

Doub. Your father, out of his great wisdom, and worldly policy——has thought fit to make choice of Mr. *Doggrell* for your husband: And you have, it seems—endeavoured to cool the heat of the Gentleman's passion,—by throwing scandal upon your ancestors—we allow—you—Madam, to sacrifice as many living reputations as you think fit.——But calumny on the dead, methinks does not lie within the province of female conversation.

Flor. Come, Father, enliven your understanding a little——Come, Sir, here is Mr. *Doggrell's* health, and to the glorious and unspotted memory of my ancestors. [*Drinks.*] Your judgement must tell you, Sir, that Love is an appetite that will not be regulated by another's palate——You that have been so long
conversant

conversant with female confessions, cannot be ignorant of the frequent combats of love and filial duty.——But you will pledge me, Sir. [Doub. *drinks.*

Doub. Sleep will not give me leave to behold your eloquence in its utmost perfection——the beauty of the speaker gives a wonderful grace to elocution——and those pretty lips of yours, child, must have a mighty persuasive faculty.

Flor. Come, father, sprightly liquor, sprightly reason.——What, refuse to pledge a woman?——See how it smiles upon you, Sir.

Doub. It must be very hard with a man, when neither Sack nor a pretty Lady can keep him awake.——But sleep, Madam, is very often an unmannerly and unfociable companion to the Ladies; but now, Madam—I have three arguments to convince you of the duty of filial obedience——and the first is this—— [Drinks.

Flor. Right Sir,——I agree with you.——The whole stress of the argument, I plainly perceive, lies in the words *filial* and *obedience*——but your glass, father, come, Sir,—will you not give me leave to pledge you! [Doublechin *drinks.*

Doub. Methinks, Madam,——the glass has a very quick circulation——But now, Madam, the second thing I shall urge is——that a daughter being not a free agent——

Flor. Not a free agent!——How, father?——What, compliment the sex with slavery?——Marry a woman to her aversion, and give her a mortification for life?——Our fortunes are very often bestowed on us, with too severe conditions.——Can a father convert a fottish, morose husband into an obliging, well-bred companion? Can he put a churl in good-humour, or make a brute in love with honour, and virtue? can a father unite separate beds, and dissuade a loose, base fellow from a mistress?

Doub. Right, Madam——right [*nods.*] But methinks, Madam, you are a little in the wrong too——
For——

For——Womens arguments are generally superficial
——and we often assent out of complaisance——I protest, Madam, the vows of our Order begin to sit a little uneasy on me——Give me a kiss,——and awaken me, my dear——

Flor. I would not, for the world, have my beauty be accessory to the mis-leading Ecclesiastical chastity——Fie, father, fie! I am concerned for you; practise mortification.——See here father,——What, give love the preference to wine?——Come, Sir, let my health give new spirit to the liquor.——

Doub. I would not have you though, Madam, misconstrue this behaviour of mine, neither.——I am not fuddled, Madam, [*Drinks.*] I must beg your pardon a moment or two.——The music of your voice, I swear, Madam hath quite charmed my senses into a lethargy, When you find my argumentative faculty grow upon me, do you see——pray be so kind as to awaken me.

[*Sleeps.*

Flor. The wings of love shall soon bear me to my charming *Merit.*——Just out of one cage into another;——but in matrimony we are like turtles, and make confinement pleasant with an agreeable companion;——Sound asleep! Come, father, deliver up your charge.——[*Takes the key out of his hand.*] Oh, Sir——your most humble servant——But stay,——A disguise would secure my escape, and therefore I must request Sir, you would oblige me with your habit. [*Gently pulls off his habit.*] Oh, dear Sir, most wonderful complaisant!——Come, my hood shall defend your bald pate from the inclemencies of the air. [*Puts her hood on his head.*]

Love like an apparition's unconfin'd,
And scorns a leading-string, though young and
blind;

Woman by nature all restraint disdains;
And she that wears, will chuse the nuptial chains.

[*Exit.*

SCENE *Changes to the Hall.**Enter Doggrell meeting Alifon.*

Ali. Ah! Ah! stripling! The rogue's dimples there betray his success.——With what air did she receive you?——Did not you observe love flush into her cheeks, and peep through her pretty sparkling eyes?——Did she sigh out never a scrap of thy poetry? No squeeze by the hand, or a gentle rap with her fan?——a'dad I knew she would fall a sacrifice to the muses.

Dog. Ah! Madam,——the most lovely of her sex! Kind, tender and obliging!——to find her pretty lips the very fountain of wit, threw me into a perfect extasy;——Harmony dwells on her voice, and *zephyrs* wanton in her breath;——*Venus* sits in her features, and her mien confesses a *Juno*——Oh! raptures and Paradise!

Ali. Were you threabouts, my man of might,——'twas I advised you, my lad, to bask in the sun-shine of her eyes——did not I tell you, that the lips were the readiest way to the heart?——A rare pupil i'fackins!——Her breath sweet as balmy *zephyrs*! 'Slidikins,——I begin to think myself young again.—*[Aside.]* Well, but did you carry your point?

Dog. Ah, Madam, infinitely beyond expectation.—She was immediately captivated with my person, in love with my family, and, as I live, downright enamoured with my poetry.

Ali. Well performed, i'faith.

Dog. Her love, Madam,——I am convinced,——is more sincere than the turtle's,——more pathetic and transporting than the sparrow's——and as immutable——as my own.

Ali. But harkye now! you ought to pursue the conquest,——'Sdiggers, I just now left her, and she sends this message to you; that nothing but a small indisposition should have hindered this morning's assignation:
That

That half an hour hence, she will make the garden the scene of love.—Here is a smart girl for you—true as steel, and as taking as tinder.—Ah boy! 'tis my very life and soul to be the harbinger of *Cupid*.—The garden,—Ah, my dear chicken! mind the garden,—then consummate your vows, and sign the contract;—and call *Hymen* to witness the bond.—Women may change, and 'tis good to have security in these cases.

Dog. Ay, Madam!—Security!—I have all the security of a husband.—Her hand, her heart, nay all her charming person. I started, Madam, with vigour into the race, and reached the goal of love the first heat.—Methinks, I have flown into *Elysium* in a dream.—Ah! *Myrtilla*, lovely *Myrtilla*!—No more shall fleeting fancy raise her shadow, nor grasp a cloud for a celestial Queen.

Ali. The garden, ah, rogue the garden!—the garden is a most inviting place: 'Sdiggers, I never think of a garden, but presently some of my youthful excursions pop into my memory.—Od's-my-life, why a damsel hath not the heart to say you a negative *No*, in an arbour, man,—Don't you remember the old song, boy?

Dog. No, I protest.—Pray, Madam, will you oblige me with it.

I.

Alif. There was a swain full fair, [Sings.

Was tripping it over the grass,
And there he spied, with her nut-brown hair,

A pretty, tight country lass.

Fair damsel, says he,

With an air brisk and free

Come let us each other know;

She blush'd in his face,

And reply'd with a grace,

Pray forbear, Sir:—no, no, no, no.

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The

II.

The lad, being bolder grown,
 Endeavour'd to steal a kiss,
 She cry'd, pish!—let me alone,
 But held up her nose for the bliss.
 And when he begun,
 She would never have done,
 But unto his lips she did grow,
 Near smother'd to death,
 As soon as she'd breath,
 She flammer'd out, no, no, no, no.

III.

Come, come, says he, pretty maid,
 Let's walk to yon' private grove,
Cupid always delights in the cooling shade
 There, I'll read thee a lesson of love.
 She mends her pace,
 And hastes to the place,
 But if her love-lecture you'd know;
 Let a bashful young muse,
 Plead the maiden's excuse,
 And answer you,—no, no, no, no.

Dog. Wonderfully entertaining I vow;—But her
 Ladyship's *no* would stand her in no stead at present.—
 May I confide in you, Madam?—For my marriage
 is as yet a secret to mankind.

Ali. Marriage?—Why, sure 'tis not come to that
 pass already.

Dog. We, last night, Madam, mutually exchanged
 our vows.—And this morning I met her, by assigna-
 tion; lovely as *Aurora*, led her to the priest; and have
 by his solemn assistance changed the beautiful Nun into
 a Bride.

Ali.

Ali. 'Sdiggers!——but you are not in earnest, I hope.

Dog. Yes, Madam; 'tis unquestionably true.——The Lady *Myrtilla*, is now, at this present instant, the lawful wife of *Francis D'Ogrelle*, Esq;——and I flatter myself that her interest at court will soon be able to honour her husband with a title suitable to the dignity of his ancestry.

Ali. Then, it seems that I have been playing a pretty game all this while.——To let a young forward baggage here make me her bait to fish for a husband!——'twas a little unchristian-like too, methinks, to take the advantage of an old woman.——But, 'lidikins,——when there is a handsome young fellow in the case.——Self is the word, and we spare neither friend nor foe. [Aside.]

Dog. The good offices, Madam, that you have done me in my late matrimonial negotiations make me request that you would honour my nuptials with your entertaining company.——But hold! Here comes my guardian.——Be secret, 'I beseech you, Madam, and let us not forestal the jest.——Now will he nauseate my taste with the smell of the kitchen, after I have supped upon quality.

Enter Franklyn.

Frank. The girl is a wag, *Frank*,——a mere wag; and invented the story purely to exercise thy love.——Come, come, marry her, boy, and make haste and get sons and daughters.——She looks like a rare breeder, *Frank*.

Ali. Gad-a-mercy my bonny *Franklyn*.——Give me thy hand, old Chronicle: The rogue has got the very air of an old sinner. Ah! friend, we were merry grigs in times past, by my fay.

Frank. Let us mind my daughter first of all——young folks appetites are keen. You are ready I see,

Q 2

Frank.

Frank,——my daughter shall make her entrance presently,——and then——*Frank*.

Dog. Now dare not I make a discovery of my marriage, 'till my Lady be present to support me against this old rogue's insolence. [*Aside*.

Frank. Methinks though,——Father *Doublechin* is a little tedious in his conferences.——*Florinda! Florinda!*——What, a vengeance! Does no body answer there?

Ali. 'Sheartlikins!——We shall have rare work upon the anvil by and by. [*Aside*.

Frank. *Florry*——*Florinda!* why, how now? What is here to be done? No body within there? [*Listens*.] Nothing stirring?

Ali. Then, by my troth,——there is no danger of your daughter, old *Nicodemus*.

Frank. But I do not like this silent sort of matrimonial disputes——What! a plague on you all,——if you don't open the door immediately——I'll rattle it down about your earts. [*He bounces at the door*.

Enter Doublechin, with a hood on his head; gaping, as just come from sleep.

Doub. Yaw, yaw. [*Gapes*.

Frank. Why heyday——What is——yaw——the meaning of all this? pox! where is my daughter?
[*Runs into the room*.

Dog. Father *Doublechin* found it convenient to indulge himself with the sweets of repose, after the fatigue of instructing a young Lady, that is all,——Ha, ha, ha!

Re-enter Franklyn.

Frank. Why, plague, thunder and combustion! Where is my daughter, I say?——Lookye father,——none of your jokes I beseech you.

Dog.

Dog. As a trophy of his conquest,——do you see, Sir?——He has adorned his head with some of your daughter's favours, ha, ha, ha!

Ali. But hark you,——Old *Jeroboam*; never give way to passion, man.——'Sbud!——Was the girl my concern——he should give an account of his private behaviour.——Bring them face to face, and 'sbuddikins! if guilt should chance to flash in my damsel's countenance,——I would do no better nor worse, but immediately qualify his reverence for a chaunter——i'fackins, I would——

Frank Where is my girl? My girl, I say.

Dog. Nay, now, Sir——you discompose yourself: be calm, I beg you.

Frank. Why, heyday.——What, is the fellow dumb?——Speak, or by *Hercules*——this cane shall presently find you a tongue, Sirrah. [*Strikes Doublechin.*]

Dog. Let me die——this is palpable incivility——I beseech you, Sir, keep your passion within the bounds of decorum.

Doub. Why Sir, why Sir,——One need be an *Argus* to keep guard on a woman.——Now, you must know, Sir, after I had——reasoned her into reason—I, I,——

Frank. Well, and what then?

Doub. Why I fell asleep——yaw——and then, Sir.——

Frank. What then, Sir——What then, Sir?

Doub. By my order, I know nothing further.——I was, after that, all in the dark.

Frank. By *Jove*, this is all a contrivance; a combination.——Furies! I am trick'd. [*Runs stamping about the stage, and beats them all*] Why, what in the name of thunder!——you are all rogues alike.——Confounded rogues, treacherous pilfering rogues.

Dog. Oh dear Sir,——'tis only your age, old fellow, that protects you in these liberties.

Frank. Why, Sirrah, if nothing else teaches you, decency, rascal; decency should teach you, like a widow,

dow, to shed a tear or two.—And you, there, doctor Paunch, what sleep upon duty, and wink at my daughter's escape?

[Franklyn walks about talking to himself.

Ali. Look in my face, old Touchwood.

Frank. Well, and what then?

Ali. Have not I a bonny complexion, my heart of oak? Dost thou not trace the remains of beauty through every feature?——Look again, man,——view me all over, old boy.——Slidikins, my face is like an ancient medal.——Antiquity does but add to its value; ——What say you, my lad? Are you for t'other bout of matrimony, t'other trip to the temple of *Hymen*? Hang forrow,——What you have lost in a daughter, man, make up in a wife.

Frank. 'Sbuddikins! I'll alarm all the country but I'll get intelligence of my girl——for who knows but this covetous rogue may have enticed her to sacrifice her fortune to a Monastery?——Ah! they have ruined many a poor foolish girl to enrich the brotherhood.

Ali. I advise you to a wife, my lusty *Nestor*; and at the same time that I prescribe you the medicine, I offer myself in person for the remedy——What think you, old greybeard? dare you venture on a girl of my vivacity?

Dog. This, I vow, is just like taking advantage of a widow's tears for her first husband, by surprising her into a consent to a second.

Ali. 'Sdiggers!——dare you interrupt my amour? i'faith, out pops your marriage, and the old fellow's anger shall strike you dead like a thunderbolt.——Lookye, Sir, your daughter hath disposed of herself, you see, and in short, this complaisant gentleman has been led by the nose by love, and——

Dog. Nay, pray Madam,——faith Madam,——'tis downright uncivil——let me die,——but you shall

shall not——Were my Lady present, she would protect me from his insults——Pox! then, if I cannot prevail with you,——indulge your spleen, and discharge the secret——I'll hum a tune, and receive the storm with all the patience of an ancient Philosopher.

Ali. In short, this same Gentleman hath disposed of himself in marriage; and 'Slidikins! we will marry in spite, and get heirs in defiance of age and the world.—We will, chicken.

Frank. Married!——the devil he is——to my daughter, I hope.

Ali. No, no,——Love hath made another choice for him;——And for your daughter, my mind gives me most plaguily, that the sly rogue that invited you to the wedding last night, hath not had the civility to invite you a second time.

Frank. Death! a mere train of misfortunes!——What, both of them obstinate wilful puppies,——Why *Frank, Frank*, you did not think yourself a fit present for my daughter, it seems; but adad, I have your love ammunition in my hands, coxcomb, and you shall whistle for your fortune 'till the law forces me to surrender it.

Dog. Fa, la, la, la.

[Sings.

Frank. Why, you ungenerous rogue you! why firrah, answer me.

Dog. Fa, la, la, la.

[Sings.

Frank. Why, was this now, *Frank*, acted like a Gentleman?

[Calmly.

Dog. Fair *Amaryllis*, in a pleasant grove,
For her dear boy a flow'ry garland wove.

Frank. Why, what a vengeance! are all the folks mad or bewitched? Have you, firrah, stole a marriage without the consent of your guardian, or not?

Ali.

Ali. Revenge yourself by your own marriage, old boy, and baulk all their contrivances.

Frank. Pox! and that is the ready way to have the revenge light on my own head too; ——— Why *Frank* now, pr'ythee now, *Frank*, do not be inspired at present, but give a man a rational answer.

Dog. For *Damon* stay'd; — *Damon* the loveliest swain;

Frank. Bred up a child under my own wing, as a body may say ———

Dog. And she the fairest Nymph of all the plain.

Frank. Mad! stark, staring mad! ——— Why *Frank*, Sirrah! ———

Doub. Thus she complains, while all the feather'd throng,

Frank. Death and confusion!

Dog. And silence, listen'd to the mournful song.

Frank. A man of your amorous constitution *Frank*, can breakfast upon a smile, dine upon a kiss, and sup upon ——— Pox! money would but make love mercenary.

Dog. Hold, hold, Sir, ——— I am married I confess, ——— But both quality and fortune accompany the Lady. ——— She hath a purse that shall vindicate my right, and make you restore what you detain by fraud and injustice; ——— But stay! Yonder she comes; the most accomplished bride that ever blessed mortality. — Youth, beauty, fortune, and ——— quality.

Enter Busie, in a Nun's Habit..

This is my Lady, Sir.

[Presents her to Franklyn.
Frank.

Frank. And what then, Sir?

Dog. Why, then Sir, 'tis my Lady,——That's all.
——An unmannerly brute! [*Aside.*] Madam, this blessing I owe to your generosity——My right honourable bride, Madam. [*To Alifon.*]

Ali. Why, heyday! *Legerdemain* and *Necromancy*! Why, Mrs. *Busie*!——art thou married in earnest, my dear girl? Ods-my-life, I wish thee joy, child, with all my heart and soul. [*Kisses her.*]

Dog. Nay, pray Madam,——This familiarity gives quality distaste.——Distance and decorum support their grandeur,——ceremony keeps them out of the vulgar method of conversation.——They are not pestered with the nauseous freedoms of friendship, nor subject to the forward liberties of good-nature.——Pray, Madam, regulate your behaviour, and remember she is a woman of quality.

Ali. Ha, ha, ha!——Or the woman of a woman of quality, Sir.

Dog. What do you mean, Madam?

Ali. That your generosity, my son of *Parnassus*, hath laid hold of the Maid instead of the Mistress.

Bus. Mr. *D'Ogrelle's* passion was not swayed by fordid interest;——Love was the only motive of his choice; and a mutual duty to each other shall make our lives glide on with serenity, and shew matrimony in its utmost perfection.

Dog. What have I done!

Frank. Ha, ha! *Frank*,——My daughter cannot be set in competition with youth, beauty, fortune——and quality.——She hath a purse, *Frank*, yes, yes, she hath a purse, for vindicating a husband's right, I don't in the least question it! ha, ha, ha!

Dog. Faith, love hath not dealt by me like a Gentleman, to reward a man of honour thus.——Oh most egregious error! embarrassed with a Chambermaid, when I bade fair for a Countess!

Frank. 'Tal de ral, tal lal.

[*Sings.*]

Dog.

Dog. Irretrievable loss! flung myself out of the *Beau Monde*, to be entertained with bone-lace, and whipping of muslin.

Frank. Tal de ral, te ral

[Sings.

Dog. I vow, this is most insupportable——What is your name, Madam? Have you any family to make me satisfaction?

Bus. *Busie*, Sir.

Frank. The *Busies* of *Yorkshire*, Sir,——As noble a family as any in Christendom; she bears for her coat, three needles proper, with a thimble *argent* for her crest——Ha, ha, ha! tal de ral.

[Sings.

Alif. Her great grandfather was killed at the battle of *Cressy*; and her great uncle, in the fifty-ninth degree, was groom of the privy-stool to *William* the Conqueror—ha, ha, ha—

Enter Merit and Florinda

Mer. Sir, I come to beg your pardon, and your blessing.

Frank. Apply yourself to your mother there, hufsey.——Adad I will marry, on purpose to get heirs to disinherit thee, gipsy.

Doub. Vindicate my honour, I beseech you, Madam;——Here my honesty hath been called in question, my continency censured, and my virtue is at stake.

Flor. Why, lookye, Sir,——then this was the case;——Love, by the help of a bottle of sack, charmed my honest father here to sleep, to assist his constant votary, which is your dutiful daughter.——Now, you must know, Sir, to secure my escape, my obliging father's Cowl and Vestments were somewhat necessary: And so, Sir, under Ecclesiastical Covert, I retired to my lover.

Alif. Ah, rogue!——Ifackins, I like a lad that pushes an amour to an extremity; that will not drop it for a disappointment, but enjoys the toil of an intrigue. [To Merit.]

Merit.] But hark you, old boy, we are to match up it seems.—Give me thy hand then, old *Nestor*—I will defy the world to shew another such like couple, in the decline of their age. Ours is a mere *Italian* autumn, that even excels the spring in its variety and beauty.

Enter Chaucer and Myrtilia.

Ha! ha! *Don Chaucer and the Lady Myrtilia!*—The Pilgrims here have made *Hymen's* the shrine of their devotion, instead of *St. Thomas's*—I hope, Madam, you will approve of Mrs. *Busie's* choice: She hath quitted your Ladyship's service, and serves, for the future, under Mr. *Doggrell*—My daughter-in-law here, is a volunteer under this Gentleman's banner—and a random glance of mine, forsooth, has captivated my old hero here.

Chau. Ladies and Gentlemen I wish you all joy,

Dog. Ah, Mr. *Chaucer*, love counterplotted me; and, I dare swear, hath now taken his revenge on me for my former cruelty to the Ladies—This creature here—

Chau. Nay, Sir; pray treat her like a Gentlewoman: her family is, without dispute of as great antiquity as any in *England*.

Dog. Then, Madam, I fly into your arms: you want no accomplishment but fortune, and that, Madam, you command by your alliance with me.

Chau. Destiny has at last crowned my wishes with the Lady *Myrtilia*, and I come now to invite the good company to celebrate the wedding.

Ali. Your Ladyship married!

Myrt. The fates have so ordained it, you see, Madam.

Ali. We wish your Ladyship joy.

Dog. Mr. *Chaucer*, I vow this is mighty strange; but I heartily congratulate you. My ambition, Madam, aspired

aspired to your Ladyship; but my fortune, Madam, threw me more upon a level. May your days, Mr. *Chaucer*, flow on with pleasure; may your nights be crowned with joy; may no cares intrude, and your matrimonial state be one constant calm. Soften my fate, Madam, and for the future call my lovely bride here, your Ladyship's Companion.

Chau. We will all turn mediators, and reconcile differences at a more convenient opportunity. In the mean time let us lovingly take hands, and agree in a Dance. Come, I'll lead it up.

A D A N C E.

Chau. She who by rules of superstition goes,
Upon herself does rig'rous laws impose ;
While fancy gives, or takes away repose. }
Yet why should I this female whim deride,
Since to her stars I owe my beauteous bride?
Through the whole sex this pious humour
runs,
Were there no Men, all Women would be
Nuns.

EPILOGUE.



EPILOGUE.

SPOKEN by Mrs. BICKNELL.

*THE Toil of Wedlock five times bravely past,
You'll say, 'twas cruel to be baulk'd at last.
Grown old in Cupid's Camp—long vers'd in Arms,
I, from my Youth have known the Pow'r of Charms:
Was I to single Combat ever slow?
Did I e'er turn my back upon the Foe?
Is this the Way old Service is rewarded,
And must the joyless Widow be discarded?
Stint me not, Love——But while I yet survive,
Throw in another Comfort to the Five.
Bless me!——When I reflect on former Days!
Youth can make Conquest sev'ral thousand Ways;
I danc'd; I sang, I smil'd,—I look'd demure,
And caught each Lover with a diff'rent Lure:
In frequent Wedlock join'd, was Woman still,
And bow'd subservient Husbands to my Will.*

VOL. III.

R

If

EPILOGUE,

*If Reason governs Man's superior Mind,
A ready Cunning prompts the Female Kind.
Then learn from me—So, Hymen bless your Lives,
Preserve the just Prerogative of Wives ;
Know to command each Look, each Tear, each Smile,
With Eyes, and Face, and Tongue, and Heart beguile:
Ev'n he that loves in Search of Game to roam,
By feign'd Reprisals may be kept at home.
Whenever Heav'n was pleas'd to take my Spouse,
I never pin'd for Thought of former Vows ;
'Tis true, I sigh'd, I wept, I sobb'd at first,
And tore my Hair—as decent Widows—must :
But soon another Husband dry'd mine Eyes :
My Life, my Dear !—Supply'd the place of Sighs :
Amidst continual Love I've relish'd Life,
A forward Maid, and a triumphant Wife.
Then grant O Cupid, this my latest Pray'r,
If no kind Husband will relieve my Care ;
Since Inclination yet out-lives my Face,
At least indulge me with a Coup de Grace.*

THE
WIFE of BATH;

A
COMEDY,

AS IT WAS ACTED AT THE
THEATRE-ROYAL

IN
LINCOLNS-IN-FIELDS.

Revised and altered by the AUTHOR.

———*Magicis fanos avertere sacris
Experiar sensus.*

VIRG.

R 2

Dra-

Dramatis Personæ.

M E N.

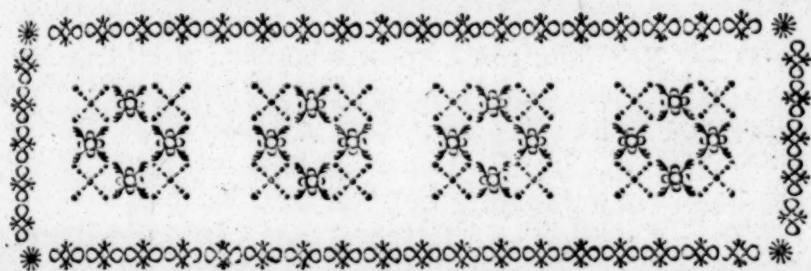
Plowdon,	Mr. BOHEME.
Sir Harry Gauntlet,	Mr. RYAN.
Doggrell,	Mr. CHAPMAN.
Merit,	Mr. MILWARD.
Hubert,	Mr. HALL.
Astrolabe,	Mr. OGDEN.
Grist,	Mr. HIPPESEY.
Spigot,	Mr. HULETT.
Shipman,	Mr. RAY.

W O M E N.

Myrtilla,	Mrs. YOUNGER.
Florinda,	Mrs. TEMPLER.
Alison,	Mrs. EGGLETON.
Bufy,	Mrs. CANTRELL.

S C E N E.

An Inn on the Road between *London* and *Canterbury*.



T H E
W I F E of B A T H.

ACT I. SCENE I.

A R O O M.

FLOWDON, DOGGRELL.

'S BUD! what matter is it though you have never seen her? Were you not left wholly to my care? Am I not your guardian? 'Tis a match that I think proper for you. Is it not sufficient that she is my daughter?

Dogg. But consider, Sir; I am but just come from the University, where I have only conversed with the Muses, and I would willingly study mankind a little before I settle.

Flowd. Have you stole a marriage in the college with your laundress, puppy? For there can be no other objection.

R 3

Dogg.

Dogg. But how can I know whether I shall like her or how can you know whether she will like me?

Plowd. I like it; and that is sufficient. I speak with the authority of a father to both of you. Since thou hast been dabbling in poetry, to be sure, nothing less than a goddess will serve thy turn. Let me tell you, *Frank*, a rich Yeoman of *Kent*'s daughter will make a much better wife than *Venus*.

Dogg. But had my father been alive, he would have insisted upon blood, Sir; upon a family.

Plowd. Is that the point then? In troth, a staunch country Yeoman, and an honest healthy country Lads, may raise as good a breed as a Lady and a Valet de Chambre, though her Lord have faith and fondness enough to own himself the father.

Dogg. But I would fain have time to consider of this matter; for the *D'Ogrelles*——

Plowd. Pr'ythee, *Frank*, don't talk to me of the *D'Ogrelles*. Thy grandfather's name was *Doggrell*, and thy father's name was *Doggrell*; and when my daughter loses the name of *Plowdon*, she will be Mrs. *Doggrell*. Indeed she will, *Frank*.

Dogg. Pardon me, Sir; the name is originally *French*, and it is written with an apostrophe; as much as to say, *De Ogrelle*, which was the ancient mansion of the family.

Plowd. Have done, Boy. I'll hear no more of these fooleries. We are now about the mid-way to *Canterbury*, and within a dozen miles of my house; to-morrow we shall leave the pilgrims, and strike off to the left hand-road. Such a merry company sure never met together! And if it were not upon your account, Boy, I should turn Pilgrim too, and they would draw me on with them to *Canterbury*. But we should go to them;——they will expect us. f

SCENE

S C E N E II.

PLOWDON, HUBERT.

Plowd. **W**HERE in all this hurry, Father? A word with you. By his haste one would think supper were upon the table. But, in troth, Father, you shall stay with me one minute. What hath put you in all this bustle?

Hub. A marriage, my good Mr. *Plowdon*; and I am afraid, should I stay a minute, the parties may not continue of the same mind; or they may agree between them to dispense with the ceremonies of the church, and I would not be the occasion of sin. They are both in so much haste, that I am sure neither of them were ever married before. Poor things, they don't know what they are about to undertake!

Plowd. Is there a match then struck up among the Pilgrims?

Hub. No, no! They are all so merry within, that one may swear not one of them is thinking of matrimony. There is a lady going to profess herself a nun, who hath just now joined them; and the Wife of *Bath* is so talkative, and so carnal, that unless I return to the Lady with Ecclesiastical persuasives immediately, I am afraid she will joke her out of her resolution. She is rich, it seems, and hath much to bestow on the Convent. You see I must go——But hold——Mr. *Plowdon*, if you are going to join the Pilgrims, this room would be convenient for the ceremony.

Enter

Enter a Footman.

Footman. Sir, my master hath sent me all over the house to look for you; he grows wondrous impatient; and if you were not to be found, he hath ordered me to call the curate; and so you will lose a good perquisite.

Hub. You will oblige us then, Mr. *Plowdon*, with your absence. You may tell your master, I am here alone, and ready to obey his commands. Sir, your servant.

[*Exit. Footman.*]

Plowdon. Curiosity will persuade me to stay to have a peep at this ceremony; so I will only step out of the way that I may not be observed.

[*Exit Plowdon.*]

Hub. This seems to be an uncanonical kind of a business, and, to be sure, requires the most canonical kind of a reward. But I will ask no questions, and suppose it just and regular, that I may not give offence to my own scrupulous conscience. If we did not now and then connive at an affair of this kind, matrimony would be nothing but a bargain and sale between parents: And, for the propagation of mankind, we should allow the world once a year, or so, to see a happy marriage to induce others to the hazardous undertaking.

Merit. Well then, to the ceremony.

SCENE III.

Merit, Florinda, mask'd. Hubert, Footman.

Merit. NOW, Father, to your office.

Hub. Does the Lady assent?

Flor. With all my heart.

Hub. But let us first secure the door, that we be not interrupted. And now, Madam, I must beg you to take off that mask, that I may be able to attest what I am going about. You will pardon me, Sir, for it may be

be necessary. By my fay, she hath a face worthy a Nun-
nery: it might afford a pleasant and delightful prospect
for Ecclesiastical contemplation. But, alack-a-day! The
good things of this world are not for us! Well; now I
am ready for you.

Plowd. Open the door; open the door! I forbid
the marriage, I forbid the marriage.

[*Knocking without.*

Merit. Never heed it, Father; begin; dispatch.

Plowd. Break open the door. Break it open, I say.

[*Knocking and hammering:—the doors forced open.*

S C E N E IV.

*Merit, Florinda, Hubert, Plowdon, Footman, Spigel,
Drawers.*

Flor. **H**A! my father!

Plowd. Thank my stars I came just in the
nick! There is as yet no harm done, unless they have
begun at the fag-end of the ceremony. How, gipsy!
what, without your father's consent! And let me tell
you, Father, such as you disgrace the Church when
you connive at, nay, promote the disobedience of chil-
dren to their parents—And as for you, Sir, though I
have got my daughter again, I will have you secured
till I know who you are.

Merit. Indeed, Sir, you came very opportunely, for
now, I hope to have the sanction of your consent. I
expected you, Sir, at this Inn, or I had not brought her
hither,

Plowd. And bolted the door upon me, as the most
ready way to get the sanction of my consent! Into what
impudent hands is she fallen! You are a rascal, Sirrah.

Merit. By the ill language you give me, one would
think

think you really were, or intended to be my father; with this lady's consent I shall allow you that privilege.

Plowd. Keep upon your knees, huffy, for I have not done with you yet. Are your silver tankard and spoons safe? Secure him, Landlord; for by his assurance he is a highwayman to be sure!

Spigot. No such matter, indeed, Mr. *Plowdon*. He's my customer, and I know him to be a worthy, honest, sensible Gentleman, for he pays the handsomest reckonings without any deductions. He hath the air of a man of quality, you may impose upon him as you think fit; he is above finding you out. No doubt, he must have had a very genteel education.

[*To Plowdon aside.*

Plowd. Why, wench, you look as easy as if you had no concern in this affair.

Flor. How can I look otherwise, when I am under my father's protection?

Plowd. What a profligate age are we arrived at! when daughters think they have a right to dispose of themselves in marriage! Here's a wench now, who can scarce cast up an account of pounds, shillings, and pence, takes upon her to drive a bargain for ten thousand pounds! Why, huffy, in disposing of yourself, I warrant you have never considered that you were putting out ten thousand pounds of your father's money.

Flor. I know my duty, Sir; but how could I help myself? He stole me as I was walking in the meadow near our house, and by violence brought me hither: he threatened me, and would have forced me to his arms; and what, alas can weak woman do when men are so resolute?

Hubert. Not an equivocation! nay, by the utmost extent that I allow myself, I cannot trace her mental reservation!

[*Aside.*

Mer. So then I find I am given up on all sides! What can she drive at! The step she took with me was beyond

beyond the practice of a Coquet, and yet the most consummate one of them all could not sacrifice a lover with more ease. Sure, there is not so much difference in women as I imagined! [*Aside.*]

Plowd. This may be all false, hussy, and I shall not trust to those smooth looks; but get you up, for you shall tell no more lies upon your knees. I have taken my resolutions. Since this kidnapper, girl, hath set your inclinations agog, I have a husband of my own providing ready to lay them. You may remember child, I have talked to you of Mr. *Doggrell*:——Let us have no fiddle faddle; what you call, consideration now. I shall forgive you too, father *Hubert*, when you have done this job for me.

Hubert. Bless me, Sir,——If I had known she had been your daughter.——But I never saw her, you know, till now; for since I have been acquainted in your family you have kept her all along at the Boarding-School, and I have been absent from this country ever since you took her home.

Plowd. Mr. *Doggrell*, girl, is a very pretty fellow.

Flor. He's at *Oxford*, Sir,——and I am not in such haste: I would not interrupt his studies.

Plowd. But I would interrupt your projects, hussy. I have brought him down with me, wench, and I will have no demurs. The jealousy of a father for a marriageable daughter is insupportable: I shall never be easy till I have shifted it off upon a husband. Where is *Frank* now? Why is he out of the way? I would get rid of my daughter, I would get rid of my care this instant. I'll cross-examine them, to be sure that I am not imposed upon. Get you into that closet, gipsy, and stay there till I call you.

Hubert. Really, if it were consistent with our duty, one would forswear the function of the matrimonial office; we so very seldom perform it to the satisfaction of all parties.

SCENE

S C E N E V.

*Plowdon, Hubert, Merit, Footmen, Spigot, Drawers,
Myrtilla, Alison.* [Myrtilla veiled.

Alison. **H** EYDAY! what is the meaning of all this uproar?

Plowd. The company are breaking in upon us. Conduct him into the other room. I'll be with you immediately, and examine this affair thoroughly. The Wife of *Bath* will talk, and I hate to be interrupted. Take notice Landlord, I leave this impudent fellow in your custody. Then *Frank* too, Father, must have some preparatory discourse before he sees my daughter, or I shall have demurs and objections from that quarter too. I will talk to you, Father *Hubert*, upon that head by and by.

S C E N E VI.

Plowdon, Alison Myrtilla.

Alison. **W** HAT hath discomposed you my good Master *Plowdon*? Hath the Wench of the Inn sworn a rape against you? Believe me, old gray beard, it cannot turn out to your disparagement. It will do you credit, if you have views of a second wife.

Plowd. I know dame *Alison*, it will be in vain to make my complaints to you upon this article; for the Wife of *Bath* was always a zealous advocate for the liberties of women.

Alif. And with very good reason, in troth; when every man alive is invading them! Every husband would

would be a *Cæsar*, if they did not now and then meet with a stubborn *Cato*, of a wife. But pr'ythee, *Plowden*, let me know after all, what is the matter?

Plowd. I have a daughter, dame.

Alif. One would have thought by the hurly-burly we over-heard, it could have been with no body but your wife. But what hath your daughter done? Where is she?

Plowd. Pouting, and plotting against her father in yonder closet.

Alif. How came she hither?

Plowd. That fellow, that rascal I sent out as you came in, (if you will take her word) stole her from my house, and brought her hither; and if I had not come upon her just in the nick, Father *Hubert* would have given the thief a right and title to her.

Alif. And so you would hang him! Let him upon all accounts marry her. How long hath he had her in possession? Perhaps you have only prevented the ceremony. You had better huddle up the marriage, indeed you had; it may prove more for her's and your own credit; for, adad! he is a sightly young fellow.

Plowd. I have a husband ready for her, Dame. Mr. *Doggrell*, the young Gentleman you saw with me is the man I have pitched upon; so that, as to a man, you see the girl hath met with no disappointment.

Alif. There you are out, Mr. *Plowden*. Let men say what they will, women do like one man better than another; look round among the husbands of your acquaintance, and you will find I tell you truth. Why, marriage would be a contented state, and cuckoldom out of fashion, if all the men were alike to us.

Plowd. But, my dear Dame, (ever set a woman to watch a woman) shall I leave her under your care, till I have dispatched this affair? You can never think the girl hardly used, for I have provided her a young husband; and that he hath an estate can be no objection;

your prudent women, who think before they marry, marry for nothing else. Talk over the affair with her, my good Dame, in your own way, and as soon as I have let *Frank* into the matter, I shall desire your company at the wedding. I must now go to the examination of the prisoner.——But I don't see why I should trust any woman; so, for security, I'll lock the door.

S C E N E VII.

Myrtilla, Alifon.

Alifon. **Y**OU see, Madam, here is a woman acting like a woman; with the spirit of intrigue, and at the same time with the spirit of disobedience. Why, in the name of *Cupid*, a Nunnery, Madam? 'Tis hard, I grant you, in marriage, to swear that you will like only one man; but sure it is harder to swear you will never like any man at all. Now, I fairly confess, as to man, I cannot answer for my own thoughts four-and-twenty hours together.

Myrt. As I am convinced Madam, marriage is not to be my destiny, I had better seclude myself from the solicitation.

Alif. Why is it not your destiny? Do you never think of a man? Do you never talk of a man? Do you never dream of a man? Sure, girl, you would not be an imperfect creature all your life! Gracious! A Nunnery! It makes one's blood run cold: But your blood must run cold, or you never could take such an un-woman-like resolution.

Myrt. Some are allotted to one state, others to another; and there is no opposing fatality.

Alif. I dare say, *Plowdon's* daughter within is of another mind: let us hear her story and her opinion upon this subject.

[*Ex. Alifon.*
Myrt.

Myrt. While we are in the world, 'tis hard to disengage ourselves from the thoughts of it. Every woman is another's tempter; by their conversation they warm one another into wishes, and encourage and assist one another in the risques of intrigue. At my return from my pilgrimage to *Canterbury*, I am determin'd, the walls of a Nunnery (whatever be my thoughts) shall be a guard upon my actions; since I am convinced that the stars have decreed me to a single life.

S C E N E VIII.

Alison, Florinda, Myrtilla.

Alison. **W**ELL, girl, since your father hath carried off your man, for your comfort and revenge, here is a sister ready to introduce you to a Nunnery. To be sure you are ready for the most desperate undertaking, to cross the old peevish put, your father!

Myrt. *Florinda!* My dear child, I have not seen you these three years, never since we lay in the same bed-chamber at the Boarding-school.

Flor. *Myrtilla!* Are you in masquerade? I hope my dear, this habit does not really belong to you.

Myrt. At my return from *Canterbury* you may see me professed. The world is not for me, so I have chosen the prudent part, to retire from it.

Alis. 'Tis her destiny, forsooth, that hath thrown this lot for her.

Flor. She was always a superstitious girl, but I never thought she would have run this length. Here my sister now is contradicting my stars, and disappointing me of a husband; but for all that I am still determin'd,

that my destiny shall be my own choice. Now I love contradiction so heartily, that I should even have a pleasure in contradicting the stars.

Alif. But let me into your affair, child; for, in your circumstance, you may want a friend; and I ever chuse to take the part of love.

Flor. I rely upon your honour, Ladies. You must know then, my father hath chosen a husband for me, and I have chosen one for myself: Now the dispute between us is, whether I shall take the man that he likes, or the man that I like: a common case between fathers and daughters.

Alif. And so, child, you were stolen with your own consent.

Flor. Very true. I took the opportunity of my father's absence, to escape from home with the man I am determined to marry; and when I was just upon the point of it, unluckily fell into my father's hands. That I might be less suspected, and have the more liberty, I have denied all this, and accused my lover of having stolen me.

Alif. Here is one man, 'tis plain, must be disappointed, unless you or I take compassion on him. Really, Madam, I should think you ought to do a less rash thing, to prevent your doing a greater. [*To Myrtila.*] But all this affair, girl, must soon be unravelled, for your father, with the husband of his providing, will be here immediately; and then nothing but obstinacy and disobedience can save you. [*To Flor.*]

Flor. I have that ready at work. 'Tis now, *Myrtila*, in your power to give me proof of your friendship. You see my stars destine me to marriage; if you will lend me your habit to escape to my lover, and remain in my place, I shall owe my future happiness to you. I hope you will not deny me.

Alif. As you can have no design upon her man, 'tis a very reasonable request; her thought is so right that
you

you cannot refuse her. If women scruple to help one another, how can love go on?—Step into the closet, chickens, and prepare matters, lest *Ploverdon* return before she is ready.

Myrt. My friendship can deny you nothing; yet I wish this request had never been made to me. But I will undergo the anger and reproaches of your father to procure the happiness of a friend.

[*Exeunt Florinda and Myrtila.*]

Alis. Ah! *Cupid*, were I rewarded for all my services, thou owest me many a good turn. I have had some love, 'tis true; but then I have run the risque of a few husbands for it; they indeed had their crosses, for I was always a woman of spirit. I shall be abused; I shall be called bawd for this affair, to be sure; and what then? If a woman is a bawd for friendly connivance, where shall we find a woman of unspotted reputation? If you invite a Lady to supper, would you be so ill bred not to invite her friend? At a party of cards, would you not make it agreeable by engaging her friend? At a ball, you would not sure let a Lady want her friend for a partner? and at a play, you would squeeze close to make room for a friend between you? Well; if friendship and good offices be sins, my acquaintance know I have many to answer for! So, here come my girls. This is well done, child; now you have got rid of the habit, I hope you have thrown aside the resolution, and that you will never take it up again; break it girl, for, on my word, 'tis not worth the keeping.

Flor. For this favour, *Myrtila*, I shall be ever indebted to you, and I hope my happiness in marriage will persuade you to follow my example.

Alis. Here's a girl now of a true female spirit, one half love and t'other half contradiction. Which is the greatest pleasure? By my fay, I would not be without either of them; but when they are together, without doubt, it gives love the more agreeable relish.

Flor. My whole scheme is disappointed at once. What shall I do? The door is locked, [*Peeping*] and my father coming with the young fellow with him! Run into the closet this instant, *Myrtilla*, I beg it of you.

S C E N E IX.

Florinda, Alison, Plowdon, Doggrell.

Plowd. **S**INCE I have got my daughter again, I was determined to get that affair first off my hands; so I have deferred the examination of the rascal, and left him without in the custody of my Landlord; for perhaps it will not be prudent to make too strict a scrutiny into this matter till the marriage is over.

Alif. Poh, poh! let him go! The man hath his mare again, and what would you have more?

Plowd. But in what disposition, Dame, did you find *Florinda*?

Alif. Sullen, Sir; very sullen.

Plowd. Ay, ay; there must be more in this matter than appears at present. But, a-lack-a-day, did not I leave Father *Hubert* with you? What is become of him?

Alif. He went out with you; we have not seen him since you left us.

Plowd. In troth, this is very unlucky; for I shall be confoundedly uneasy till this business is over. — Pr'ythee, *Frank*, will you try what you can do with her? The Dame here shall introduce you, and speak a good word for you. In the mean time I will look out for father *Hubert*.

Flor. My presence shall be no restraint upon their courtship. You will find me, Madam, among the Pilgrims.

SCENE

S C E N E X.

Alison, Doggrell.

Doggrell. **W**HAT can Mr. *Plowdon* mean by all this haste? I have never seen his daughter, and I am not fond of the alliance.

Alis. Then she will be quite new to you; and, without doubt, you have good taste enough to like a new face. But I suppose you intend to know the life of a fine Gentleman, and run helter-skelter among the sex before you settle. There is courage in that way of life, I grant you; but, adad! it may spoil the breed of your family.

Dogg. This too would at once cut short all the gallantries of my poetry; I designed, like other poets, to have had a hundred imaginary mistresses before I had one real one.

Alis. The girl shall not ravish you. Curiosity should persuade you to see her. Why, sure, stripling, you are not afraid of a woman! She is no old maid, I can assure you, and is not at that desperate time of life to take the first man that falls in her way.—*Florinda!*

S C E N E XI.

Alison, Doggrell, Myrtilla.

Alison. **G**IVE me leave, Madam, to introduce Mr. *Doggrell* to you; the Gentleman your father designs for your husband.

Myrt.

Myrt. As a stranger he claims my civility : But sure no well-bred man would be guilty of the rudeness to marry a Lady against her inclination ; besides, should the wife resent, you know, Madam, it in time may make the match very disagreeable to him.

Dogg. 'Tis, I confess, a kind of rape for life.

Alij. And, 'ifackins, 'tis in a wife's power to prove it a most conspicuous capital offence.

Dogg. Who could have imagined that old *Put's* daughter could be half so agreeable ! so well-bred ! so like a Gentlewoman ! I hope, Madam, 'twas with your consent your father hath given me his ; or at least that you will have no objections to his choice.

Myrt. Though I had none, undoubtedly you must have many. Would you marry the woman who would be married to any man at first sight ? You are a stranger, Sir. Is it possible I can have thought of you in the view of a husband ?——I am certain, every man of sense must be disgusted with a woman that could be so forward to seem to listen to a proposal of this kind.

Dogg. Why, really, Madam, since I have seen you, all my objections are answered ; and I must acquaint you, your father grows outrageous upon the least hint of delay. He hath consented, and I consent.

Myrt. Disobedience then defend me ! I shall give you leave to visit me.

Dogg. Your father may dispose of me ! I shall implicitly obey his commands.

Myrt. What ! Take the advantage of an arbitrary father ! No civility before Marriage ! I see what I am to expect. If you will allow me consideration, I do not give you an absolute refusal ; and I think this is too much encouragement for a first visit. Now you know my mind.

Alij. You should always let a woman comply with you in her own way. This hurry and haste might do with a widow who knows what she is about ; but your maiden is a timorous kind of creature ; let her have her

her humour for a day or two, she will grow more familiar and tame to you by degrees.

Dogg. I cannot, Madam, for my heart, refuse Mr. *Plowdon's* offer.

Myrt. But I can.

Dogg. I must be content then, Madam, to take you in his way.

Myrt. And I must be content to refuse you in my own. The fellow grows impudent. I shall hate you.

Dogg. I know myself, Madam, and I shall venture that.

Myrt. Most audacious! You have already the influence of an ill-bred husband; I'll hear no more; I'll make no reply; I have an answer ready for my father that shall serve for both of you.

[*Myrtilla sits, and leans in a melancholy posture.*

Alif. Ay, the spleen! over-run with the spleen! Woman is so weak that she must have her own way.

S C E N E XII.

Myrtilla, Alifon, Doggrell, Plowdon, Hubert.

Plowdon. WELL, *Frank*, what think you of the girl now you have seen her? Whether you like her or no, you shall have her; so you may speak your mind.

Dogg. Why, really, Sir, the objections now are all on her side, mine were all removed at sight.

Plowd. Hold up your head, hussy, and look chearful. Take her by the hand, *Frank*. — How, hussy! won't you give the Gentleman your hand when I bid you?

Myrt. No.

Hub.

Hub. Will you consent, fair Lady, that I join your hands?

Myrt. No.

Plowd. Is this language to a father? Comply this instant, gipsy, or you will provoke me.

Myrt. I won't.

Plowd. You won't!—Down upon your knees, you positive flut; down, I say!—Furies! Who have we here? What have you done with my daughter?

Alif. Ha, ha, ha! only a little innocent mummery! You will persuade us then you did not know her in the Nun's habit when she went out of the room with you: The Lady, and she, and I had a mind to divert you. Don't be concerned, your daughter will not turn Nun in earnest.—'Twas only a frolic, indeed 'twas only a frolic.

Plowd. Let me go.—Let me go.—You are her accomplices, all of you.

Alif. Hold him, Father *Hubert*. Talk to him, Father, of the sin of anger; 'tis your duty to prevent transgression.

Myrt. My friendship hath engaged me too far in this worldly affair; I grow scandalous to myself. I cannot bear to expose myself any longer out of my character.

[*Aside.*

Dogg. I knew by her behaviour she must be a woman of fashion. I have now the strongest reason in the world to have nothing to do with that old fellow's daughter. [*Aside.*] I hope, Madam, my love will have interest enough to prevail with you never to put on that habit again.—There is nothing like perseverance; so, I'll follow her.

[*Exeunt. Myrtilla and Doggrell.*

SCENE

S C E N E XIII.

*Plowdon, Alifon, Hubert.**Hub.* I Dare not trust a madman.*Plowd.* Pimp, Pandar!*Hub.* Indeed, Mr. *Plowdon*, I dare not.*Plowd.* Bawd. You are a bawd.*Hub.* Anger, Mr. *Plowdon*, hath been looked upon, in all times, as a short madness.*Plowd.* Furies! Father, my daughter, I tell you, is run away.——And you, you bawd, would give her time for escape. Could I but get at my sword! I should have the murder of one or both of you to answer for.*Alif.* Tie him, Father *Hubert*. Lend him your girdle a while: That rope may save him from a more fatal one.*Hub.* He raves, indeed, of murder.*Alif.* Cool him with some lenitive admonitions.——More lenitives against the fatal consequences of anger.*Plowd.* Thank my stars; here comes my Landlord, with some of the Pilgrims, to my relief.

S C E N E XIV.

*Plowdon, Alifon, Hubert, Spigot, Shipman.**Shipman.* WHERE's my master *Plowdon*? Adad! we have had a rare uproar upon your account yonder.——Your daughter was sheering off under false colours, had not *Grist* the Miller laid an
em-

embargo upon her. What! I warrant, it was against your consent, and she had stole duty!

Plowd. My daughter! Where is the jade? Help, release me, unhand me! But pray, Landlord, what have you done with the fellow I left in your custody too?

Spig. Since you had no more to say to him, all the business I had with him, was to receive his reckoning, and to wish him a good journey.

Plowd. That was not well done, Landlord. Are you sure, honest sailor, that my daughter is safe?

Shipm. Grist, you see yonder, is towing her hither. Adad! I believe the little runner would fain be adrift again.

S C E N E XV.

Plowdon, Hubert, Alison, Spigot, Shipman, Grist, Florinda, &c.

Plowdon. **B**Y my troth, that *Grist* is a very honest fellow; I would trust him with any thing—but my corn.—Neighbour *Grist*, this was kindly done of you. But how could you find her out through this disguise?

Grist. A man who hath kept a mill is frequented by so many women, that he must know something of their ways. The most mealy-mouthed of them all can never impose upon me; for you must know, I always suspect a woman. She offered money to the sailor there, to give a letter to the young fellow that you left with my Landlord. But, 'ifackins, the young woman begged so pitifully, that if your honour had not been my good customer, I should not have baulked her fancy.

Alif. Without doubt these young slippery flirts have a pleasure in imposing upon us old folks.

Plowd.

Plowd. I shall forgive you every thing, girl, provided you will now chearfully finish this affair. Come, I know you will be good. Comply with your father for this once; after you are married, you may divert yourself with disobedience: I have had my share of your perverseness already. This good company, Father *Hubert*, shall be witnesses of the marriage; and then we'll send and invite the rest of the pilgrims, and make a merry night of it. Every thing, you find, Mr. *Doggrill*, is at last agreed upon: give my daughter your hand. What a-vengeance, gone! Now 'tis his turn to run away. If they had been married these ten years, they could not keep more opportunely out of one another's way. Furies this is not to be borne!

Alif. Another fit! Good-lack-a-day! If his fits come so quick upon him, this must end in bleeding and confinement.

Shipm. Now, to my thinking, you are all very hard upon the Gentleman, that you won't let him ease his mind by a few oaths or so. If our boatswain did not every now and then give his passion vent that way, o' my conscience, he would burst.

Grist. Why should we hinder my master *Plowdon*? Let him have the full scope of his passion; it may do him good: We none of us need mind it.

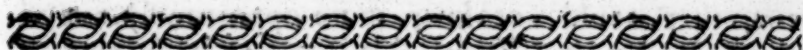
Plowd. Since things will not go as I would have them, I'll have all the security I can. I'll lock you, wench, into your room for this night. You shall fast, huffy; for these gadding tricks of yours require mortification.

Alif. The old fellow had as good give up this affair; the girl hath a spirit, and will bring her matters to bear at last: Indeed she will, father. You have heard confessions, and I know you must be of my opinion. Troth, I think women are in the right of it, not to be over-ready in taking advice. Every fool can give advice, every quack can give physic; but who will take

it? Good counsel now and then works upon us; and what can men boast of more? We are not so unreasonable.

The best advice comes sometimes out of season;
When reason's on our side, we side with reason.

END of the FIRST ACT.



A C T II.

S C E N E I.

Myrilla, Alison, Busy.

Alison. GRACIOUS! A Nun at these years! And with so much beauty! What a degenerate age are we arrived at! Fie Madam! Fie!——'Tis for such as you to be useful in your generation. All your five senses about you, and not one spark of love! Alack-and-well-a day, the true breed of woman-kind is no more! Let me die, if I do not think it unnatural! There cannot be such difference in constitutions; by my fay, girl, 'tis impossible. Lookye, my dear, if you are set upon confinement and discipline, I would infallibly advise you to a husband. Give any husband but his head, and I'll promise you enough of both of them to exercise any reasonable woman's patience.

Myrt.

Myrt. When it is allotted by the stars that a person shall always remain in the single state, 'tis but common prudence to retire from the world.

Alif. The stars! A pretty impediment, truly! Why, they are *Cupid's* lamps, girl, and have served to light many a lover to his mistress. Believe me child, star-light hath been reckoned the best love-light in all ages, and all countries; to my knowledge, they have been aiding, abetting, and assisting to many an intrigue. Besides, let your star-gazers say what they will, I do not think it in the power of all the stars in the firmament to influence so ticklish a thing as a woman's inclination.

Myrt. Sure, Madam, experience must have taught you to the contrary, and you cannot be such an infidel to call in question the truth of judicial Astrology! My case too is very particular; for all the Astrologers that I was ever so unhappy as to consult, hint at the same thing.

Alif. The only Planet that should influence and govern me is the moon, ever changing, and by that trick new every month.

Myrt. Besides, Madam, every other thing, concurs. I have tried three *Midsummer-Eves*, and there hath not appeared so much as the shadow of a man.

Alif. What signifies the *shadow*, when your Ladyship hath youth and beauty enough at any time to command the *substance*?

Myrt. But it is my resolution to retire.

Alif. Consider, friend, that resolution must be very rash and desperate, where even repentance can nothing avail. Let me look on your hand, honey. Bow your hand a little more. There, there, enough. As promising a hand as ever returned a squeeze! Ay, look upon it yourself, my dear. Ods-my-life! There it is. That little forked line there! A manifest husband. Let me see. Now, for children!—Children! Gracious!

as I live, three fine bouncing boys, and four girls! A woman that must have seven children, if she would preserve her character, must either turn prude, or get her a husband.

Busy. My Lady hath had many a good offer to be sure, and she need not drive matters to extremities.

Alis. And that mole there beneath the tip of your right ear is a shrewd sign.——I could tell you where you have another; but so much for that.

Busy. Nay, Madam, now you must be convinced she does know something of the matter.

Alis. Lookye, my dear, thanks to my lucky planets, I have made a shift to dispatch five good men already, and welcome the sixth, say I! I fear him not. One, two, three, four, five? and here is another little tiny thing; if it will not reach to a husband, my life for it, my good management shall make it stretch to a fine hopeful gallant.

Busy. Methinks one's natural inclination would induce one to try matrimony once purely for the sake of novelty. Now I own I have curiosity.

Myrt. 'Tis not, Dame, that I have the dread of matrimony before my eyes: As to the love of power, I feel I have the spirit of a woman; but really, Dame, I question your skill; you only amuse and flatter me. Are you sure this mark signifies a husband?

Alis. Am I sure that I ever knew the comforts of one?

Busy. Nay, Madam, the mark is as plain in your hand as in mine; and I have no doubts about the matter.

SCENE

S C E N E II.

Myrtila, Alifon, Busy, Hubert.

Hub. NEVER mind that carnal woman, Madam; her conversation is enough to stagger the most determined resolution. She blows the coals of inclination. She is *Cupid's* incendiary, and will talk up the coldest heart into a flame. Let chastity, Madam, be your guard against this advocate for incontinence.

Alif. I am persuading her to her duty, father. Was she not born to multiply? Answer me that.

Hub. But if her virtue is strong enough to renounce the pleasures of the world——Marriage is only a kind of necessary indulgence for the weak and frail.

Alif. Heretical doctrine! What, speak against the holy institution of marriage, father?

Hub. You mistake me, dame: To some women, (to such constitutions as yours, I mean) I would inculcate matrimony; but at the same time, in others I would encourage devotion. You, such as you, can have no notions of the contentment and sweet serenity of a Nunnery.

Alif. You plead for a Nunnery; I, for a husband. Let her hear the arguments on both sides, and then chuse. Sure a woman may lose her liberty in the way that is the most agreeable to her.

Myrt. I can safely hear what she hath to say, for my lot is already cast.

Hub. Marriage, you know, dame, is for life——

Alif. Hold, father!——So is a convent.

Hub. With a man——

Alif. Without a man——

Hub. But you won't let me speak.—With a man whose temper may vary.

T 3

Alif.

Alif. With a number of women, only women; whose tempers are all variable.

Hub. You are too quick upon me, Dame.—The husband may be morose, may be jealous——

Alif. But then she may have had the pleasure of giving him occasion.

Hub. The care of children——

Alif. The envying of those that have them.

Hub. The anxiety of domestic affairs——

Alif. The being always confined within the same walls——

Hub. Curtain-lectures——

Alif. No man to preach them to her——

Hub. The contradiction of a husband——

Alif. The contradiction of her own inclinations——

Hub. Secluded from all the cares of life——

Alif. And from all the pleasures too——

Hub. No temptation——

Alif. To be come at——

Hub. The solitude——the enjoying her own thoughts——

Alif. The nothing else to enjoy.—The very worst husband promises better than all this. Why must you have a woman shut up with you? Have you not opportunities enough? Are you not frequently shut up with those that are abroad?

Hub. You grow scandalous, woman. There is no bearing your discourse.

Alif. But we have said nothing of the comforts of matrimony all this while. The harmony, the friendship——

Hub. Of perpetually telling one another their faults, either imaginary or real ones.

Alif. A man always in your power.

Hub. You always in his.

Alif. You never were married, Father; and most married men know to the contrary. If she were alone I could say more to her; but I leave the rest to her imagination——

Hub.

Hub. Go, go, naughty woman! There is no talking with you upon this subject. I shall take another opportunity. By perverting my meaning, she weakens all my arguments. Continue your resolution, and think of a Nunnery.

Alif. And there have the perpetual torment of thinking and wishing for a husband. For the benefit of mankind, so fine a woman should not be lost.

Hub. You flatter her, you only flatter her, Dame *Alison*.

Alif. You inveigle her, you only inveigle her, Father *Hubert*.

Hub. What! arraign the admonitions of the church! You are carnal-minded, Dame; very carnal-minded.

Alif. One would think you were particularly so by your solicitations.

Hub. You are now too scurrilous. I shall excommunicate you, Dame *Alison*!

Alif. That you may do, but you shall never put me in a Convent; that I can tell you, Father *Hubert*!

Hub. In my next visit, I hope I shall speak my mind without all this impertinence, Dame *Alison*!

Alif. Impertinence! Give better language, or your cloth shall not protect you. Were you a woman, you durst not have said that to me, Father *Hubert*!

Myrt. Have done; I beg it of you; the dispute is become too noisy, and it grows late.

Hub. Scurrility! downright scurrility!—— I'll disappoint her, and put an end to her talk by removing the subject. [Exit.]

Alif. For want of a reply, at last you were driven down to foul language!—— Was not I all along, Madam, in the right of it? I will not intrude upon your patience. Consider what I have said. 'Tis, I vow, a strange thing our *English* Ladies should be so backward in coming to knowledge. Why, an *Italian* girl thinks at eleven, meditates at twelve, and ripens into perfection at thirteen; and here we shall have an awkward

awkward *English* Bride want advice on her wedding-day, though she be not married till five and twenty. Go, make haste to bed, child; think of the fortune I have told you, and dream of a husband.

S C E N E III.

Myrtilla, Busy.

Myrt. IF it were not quite opposite to my stars, I should just now be inclined to think the wife of *Bath* not so much in the wrong. Nay, now I recollect myself, every thing hath not concurred against her? for you may remember, *Busy*, I flung two husbands at the fortune-book about a year ago.

Busy. Perfectly well, Madam.

Myrt. The last astrologer too I unluckily consulted upon *Childermas-Day*, so that I could not possibly have any good fortune happen to me then.—Ah! there is a pin with the point towards me! Take it out of my sight this instant.

Busy. I wish your ladyship would not discompose your self for such trifles.

Myrt. But such trifles as these have warned me out of many inconveniences. If you had minded them too, it might have been much better for you.

Busy. Bless me! I have pricked my finger.

Myrt. Thank my stars, the pin hath done its mischief. I was indeed afraid it pointed at me. Confess fairly, *Busy*; didst thou ever in thy life spill salt without anger?

Busy. I was always angry with myself for spilling the salt.

Myrt. Thou wilt always, wench, be an unbeliever. But now I recollect too another favourable circumstance: About a week ago, when I laid the bride-cake under my pillow I dreamed of Sir Harry Gauntlet.

Busy.

Busy. Poor Sir Harry Gauntlet! 'Twas your cruel usage sent him a travelling.

Myrt. If any man could have prevailed, I own it would have been him: But he hath had his absolute refusal.

Busy. And so have many lovers who have succeeded.

Myrt. By this day's fasting I have prepared myself for one experiment more. What o'clock is it?

Busy. Almost ten, Madam.

Myrt. This, I am resolved, shall be the last trial: I go to make ready the Dumb-cake; 'tis St. Agnes's night, and the hour approaches. Now don't you be out of the way, *Busy*. [Exit Myrtilla.]

Busy. How strong must be her superstition, when it can prevail against her inclination! It hath forced this Nunnery upon her. Why is she so set upon a Nunnery? It cannot be the discontent of poverty, for she is rich. It cannot be disappointed love, for she may have her choice. She is not made a sacrifice to the avarice of a Parent, for she is an orphan. Superstition, in short, hath got the better of the woman, and she implicitly gives up the pleasures of her youth to her credulity. Bless me! it is impossible, it cannot be he! — Sir Harry Gauntlet!

S C E N E IV.

Busy, Sir Harry Gauntlet.

Sir Harry. **W**Hat! turned pilgrim, my girl! I was very luckily a day or two ago informed of *Myrtilla's* resolution.

Busy. But, dear Sir Harry, how long have you been returned from your travels?

Sir Harry. But a very few days; and as much in love as ever. My passion was beyond the cure of absence, and I could like no woman, but as she more or less put me in mind of *Myrtilla*.

Busy.

Bufy. Her heart is fortified by superstition; the stars oppose you, and the planets fight against you: In short, she hath nothing weak about her but her inclination.

Sir Harry. Am I quite forgotten, Mrs. *Bufy*?

Bufy. You have said so many fine things to her, that she must have a very bad memory, or very little vanity, if she does not remember some of them.

Sir Harry. Do you think no man whatever could divert her from this rash, extravagant project?

Bufy. There are questions not proper to be answered. Confidantes, Sir, must not divulge secrets.

Sir Harry. Am I come so opportunely to thy relief, when thou hast so uneasy a thing as a secret within thee?

Bufy. We are not so communicative as you imagine. A woman, Sir, always sets the true value upon a secret; for she never tells it but to her best Friends.

Sir Harry. But a secret of this consequence! You see, I dare trust you with one first. [*Gives her money.*]

Bufy. When a gentleman is so open, he always draws one in to talk freely, in return.—You know, Sir, my lady is as superstitious as an ignorant, doating abbess: Her humour by day depends upon her dreams by night; spilling salt throws her into the vapours; she loses half the week upon the score of unlucky days, and from her cradle she hath had an implicit confidence in all astrologers. And those illiterate fellows have put this thing in her head.

Sir Harry. And so your lady, to prove those fools in the right, hath resolved to prove herself all her life in the wrong! If superstition did not give up common sense, astrology would soon lose all its credit.

Bufy. She just now indeed was a little wavering. The wife of *Bath* is but this moment gone from her; with her merry tattling way, she almost laughed her out of her project, and my lady, to my thinking, seemed to feel her conversation. My good dame, I should have told you, consulted her hand, and (in all appearance,
much

much to her satisfaction) contradicted all her former fortune by a promise of a husband.

Sir Harry. There lies the judgment of an astrologer. His predictions always prove true, when he foretels that a woman will do what she likes.

Busy. The thing at present is so far undetermined, that this being *St. Agnes's* night, she hath, in all the forms, prepared the Dumb-Cake; and 'tis my opinion, her imagination is so warm that it will deceive her into an agreeable vision of the man she hath in her head, and then, Nunnery, adieu!

Sir Harry. The most lucky incident in the world! Approaches, by the way of her superstition, cannot fail of success. With your assistance, *Mrs. Busy*, to-night I'll play the apparition.

Busy. Just my thought, I vow. I always had a very good opinion of you, *Sir Harry*. Exactly at twelve! Remember the hour. The key of my room, through the closet, will let you into hers. You see I would go great lengths to contribute to my Lady's happiness. I know she is now expecting me, and company I see is coming in upon us. Go with me, and see me go in, that you may know where to find my room again. I shall expect you before twelve.

S C E N E V.

Merit, Spigot.

Spigot. **I**N troth, *Mr. Merit*, you are so very much disguised, that I can scarcely believe my own eyes. You could not be known by your most intimate acquaintance. Believe me, *Sir*, you may safely go among any company in the house without the least suspicion.

Merit. You delivered my letter, you say?

Spigot. Do you doubt me, *Sir*? As to such kind of affairs, leave me alone to serve a good customer. Why,
Sir,

Sir, I was bred up a drawer in *London*, and if I had not turned my hand to this sort of business, how think you I got wherewithal to set up an Inn? When he called for a fresh bottle, I took the opportunity, and while I gave him the glass with one hand, I gave her the letter with t'other. Master *Plowdon* makes but sparing reckonings, and it would be no great loss, if he should ever find me out, and take to the *Red-Lion* over the way.

Merit. If I mistake not, you were saying that you overheard some of the discourse.—I think, Mr. *Spigot*, you have never a handsome silver tankard in the house.

Spigot. I make it my request that it may have your honour's arms upon it, to put me in mind of drinking your health: But, alack-a-day, I had almost forgot it, we must drink the Lady's. Here, Drawer, a bottle of wine! Sit you down, Sir,—I can't help saying that your honour hath made a very handsome choice, and she will be a rare fortune. Set down the bottle and glasses, and about your business, Sirrah.

Merit. She does not then shew the least symptoms of compliance.

Spigot. A rare obstinate Girl, i'faith! If she prove always in the right, she will make a most excellent wife. But, a plague on it, my wife is always obstinate, and always in the wrong, and that, you will say, is a little provoking: But we must all take our chance. Yonder comes *Grist*, you can never be known, and from him we may learn more of the matter.

Merit. I never saw him,—By all means ask him to sit down.

Spigot. The young fellow, your rival, is with him.
[To *Merit* apart.] Master *Grist*, if you and your friend have no particular affairs, this honest gentleman and I shall all be obliged to you for your company.

SCENE

S C E N E VI.

Spigot, Merit, Grist, Doggrell.

Dog. **I** Marry that old put's daughter, Master *Grist*! I know my duty to my family better. Besides, I am actually in love too with a woman of condition. Tho' he hath my fortune in his hands, neither that, nor my person are at his disposal.

Grist. Mr. *Plowdon* is my very good friend; and as my mill hath his constant custom, I may, in a manner, say that I owe my bread to him; so that I ought to be so neighbourly to him as to wish him a good harvest, or so; but farther than that, d'ye see, I have nothing to say to him nor his daughter neither.

Spigot. If you are not upon private affairs, Gentlemen, we beg you to join conversation. You see, Sir, I make use of a landlord's privilege. 'Tis the whole amusement of my life to divide myself among my guests, for I love to entertain them all as well as I can. Now this is the way I live every day of my life.

Grist. The affair we were talking of is no secret. It hath set the whole Inn in an uproar. This is the young gentleman Mr. *Plowdon* intended for his daughter; but it seems the gentleman hath other intentions of his own.

Spigot. You are his neighbour and friend, Mr. *Grist*; I left you just now together. You should persuade him to temper.

Grist. Why, as a neighbour and friend, Mr. *Spigot*, he claims the privilege of being more unreasonable with me than with any body else. His daughter, I must own, is a fine, obstinate girl, and seems resolved never to repent of her over-hasty obedience. I mistake her shrewdly or she hath other grist to grind; and if

she hath, Mr. *Doggrell*, adad, is even with her, for her mill he owns is not for his Turn.

Merit. Does she give him no answer at all?

Grist. Not a word; she is as still and silent as a mill-pool, and just like that, only because she cannot have her own way; but, in troth, she will have it at last, or break bounds. So I told him, which put him in a plaguy passion. He then grew so obstreperous, that (though I am a Miller) he was too noisy for me; and so I left him determined to lock up his daughter to-night in the next room to his own.

Dog. Let us have done with that old fool and his daughter. What think you, Landlord, of the lady in the Nun's habit? Is not she a most delicious piece?

Spigot. Hah! Mr. *Doggrell*, are you thereabouts?

Dog. Her manner, her behaviour, her conversation, bespeak her a woman of condition. A fine gentleman would not be thrown away upon her. I hate any thing that is vulgar.

Merit. Then to rescue a young Lady from being immured in a convent, is an amour of spirit. Hath she beauty, Sir, equal to her birth?

Dog. You must know, Sir, till I saw her, my Muse was my only mistress; but she hath given me an idea of beauty beyond all poetical description. The Sun, Moon and Stars, and such kind of things, are not sublime enough for her, I feel she hath inspired me; my imagination is on the wing; 'tis impossible not to write. And I know by her eye she hath a soul susceptible of verse.

Merit. 'Tis the resolution, Sir, of a man of sense. Would you allow another to chuse you a companion or a friend? Without doubt, no. Much less surely would I allow another to chuse me a wife. 'Tis an imposition for life; and a man of spirit hates all imposition.

Grist. Now, to my thinking, there is very little choice in the matter, for women are no sooner made wives than

than they become all alike. Why there's Mr. *Spigot's* wife now hath my wife's ways to a hair. Their clacks are eternally going. They will take a world of care off our hands too, and you may hear them governing the family all the house over, and all the day long.

Merit. Love-verses, Sir, are very insinuating, and those, with perseverance, must undermine the strongest resolution. You will excuse me, Gentlemen, it grows late.—This Fool's Conversation hath given me Hope. [*To Spigot.*] Gentlemen, your Servant.

[*As the Company are breaking up, Enter Alison.*]

S C E N E VII.

Spigot, Grist, Doggrell, Alison.

Alis. **B**Y my fay, Lads, I shall not part with you yet. This going to bed every night, unless upon a good occasion, is the bane of all good society. I ever thought sleep so much time lost; but I never could persuade any one of my five husbands to be of this opinion. Come sit you down, Master *Grist*. For shame, Younker! Going to bed! If a woman is in the case, you have indeed the only gentleman-like excuse for leaving your bottle. Fill about, Landlord, 'tis your interest to encourage mirth. In troth, Mr. *Doggrell*, I have many precepts, and much matter of advice to give you, but if company stays for you, and you have any thing to do besides sleep, get you to bed, and leave us to our wine; for I would, upon no account, be any gentlewoman's hindrance. Come, Boy on t'other hand of me then. Here's to your inclinations. Poh! Fill a bumper, Goodman *Grist*, and then you drink your own inclinations too. You see my bonny host there sets you a good example.—By my troth, a handsome young fellow!—And I am far enough advanced in years to have a taste for these sort of striplings:

U 2

Dog.

Dog. *Myrtilla!* divine *Myrtilla!* [*Drinking.*

Alif. And why not *Florinda*? Ever lay hold of the woman you can come at. Now to my thinking, *Plowdon's* daughter is a good fightly wench. Were I a young fellow, in troth I could not baulk her.

Grist. Nor I neither.

Dog. Were I a Miller, I should say so too. Why thou canst not look upon a woman with the eye of a gentleman.

Grist. But I can look upon a woman with the eye of a man; that is to say, consider a woman as a woman. Now I'll be judged by my Dame here, if that is not looking upon a woman as she would be looked upon.

Alif. These nice distinctions, my Boy, are not becoming your youth. But pray, Younker, let me know in what light a gentleman considers a woman?

Dog. As a woman fit for a gentleman. There's a taste in the choice of a woman.

Grist. Miss *Florinda*, for aught I know, may not be for your tooth: She will not break her heart, that I can tell you; the young woman is as unwilling as yourself, and in refusing her, you only disappoint her of the pleasure of disobedience. Yet for all that, Master *Plowdon* swears he will bring matters about at last: For why, quoth he, should I be more scrupulous than other parents? And indeed what is it to him whether, forsooth, you love one another or no?

Dog. How love works in the imagination! *Myrtilla!* divine *Myrtilla!*

Alif. Why divine *Myrtilla*? What signifies thinking of a woman as an angel? You would have a much better chance by considering her, and talking to her as a woman.

Dog. Had I such an advocate as you, Madam—

Alif. You would do just as you do now, sit still and think of her, and so discredit my recommendation. Believe me, Lad, a woman is often won by speaking without thinking, but never by thinking without speaking.

Dog.

Dog. Could I be so happy as to have you, Dame, for my introducer!

Alif. But why will you have any introducer at all? Love is always the better heard, when he is his own advocate, and without witnesses. And so, stripling, you look upon me of an age fit only to set young folks together, and think of times past.

Dog. I beg your pardon, Madam.—Could I have seen *Myrtilla's* maid, I should not have presumed to have talked to you upon this subject.

Alif. Upon what subject? You may speak freely, Younker.

Spigot. The gentleman, perhaps may be upon the reserve before company.

Grist. And so may my good Dame too.

Dog. For that matter, Sir, I am not ashamed of shewing my verses, I own I have writ upon her. All I ask, Madam, is, that you would do me the office of a *Zephyr*, and bear my sighs to the lady.

[*Takes a paper out of his pocket.*]

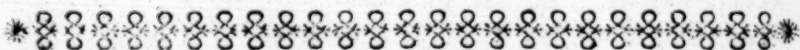
Alif. We have no private affairs at present. We'll all break up together.—You shall shew the verses by and by in my own room; and there we'll consider how I may be of use to you.

Dog. Upon my word, I have no scruples, nor ever had, of communicating my poetry,—Nay, pray, Gentlemen, I should be glad of your opinion. [*Exeunt Spigot and Grist. Doggreil walking and reading to himself.*]

Alif. Let us into my room then stripling; there we can talk easier and freer. I hate to be over heard by tapsters and servant-maids. Put up your verses, Sir: *Spigot and Grist* are gone, and I am sure you have read them before.—He is conceited; he is a fool; but he is young and handsome, and an opportunity at my time of life is not to be lost. My mind gives me that I shall make something of this young fellow. Those conceited coxcombs, who impose upon themselves, tempt their

honest neighbours to impose upon them too. Now, because he hath had one woman offered him, his vanity thinks no woman can deny him.

In love, he's like the dog, (that foolish glutton)
Who for a shadow lost substantial mutton.



A C T III.

S C E N E I.

MYRTILLA'S Apartment.

Alison, Busy.

Busy. 'TIS late, Dame, and my Lady requires my attendance; so I must beg to be excused 'till to-morrow.

Alis. Nay, Mrs. *Busy*, I will not be denied. I must, and will speak with you. Your Lady, I know, hath a kindness for Miss *Plowdon*; besides, by what you have said of her, I am sure you too wish her well; and I must acquaint you, your love can never be more seasonably shewn than just now; for the girl is in imminent danger of marriage.

Busy. To-morrow, my good Dame: Let us talk over this affair to-morrow. But what, after all, in the name of love, would you have my Lady do?

Alis. Have her do? Have her take the natural diversion of woman, and play the coquet. Mr. *Deggrell*,
you

you know, is smitten with her; and the least encouragement from her, would take him quite off from *Florinda*. By flattering and deceiving him, I would have her divert herself, and save her friend.

Busy. To be sure, Dame, I must know her way of thinking; and I know she hates herself for so far meddling in the affair already. She loves *Florinda*, I grant you, and would do much for her: But to expose her character again, as she calls it!—pshaw! pshaw! I know she never will consent to it.

Alis. I would not have you be too positive, girl. A lady may be cool and phlegmatic enough to refuse a man; but to deny herself the satisfaction of deceiving a man! I must beg your pardon for that!—I know somewhat of women too, Mrs. *Busy*, and I will not believe any thing so very improbable.—For my part, I don't know whether that is not the greater pleasure of the two.

Busy. To convince you, Dame, that I myself would do any thing, in my power, to serve Miss *Plowdon*.—But after all, what can I do? For I know my Lady will upon no account consent to see the young fellow again.

Alis. But you may flatter him with the hopes of it.

Busy. Upon my word, Dame, at this time 'tis impossible. My Lady wants me this moment.—If you could contrive to play off the young fellow, you may say for me what you please.

Alis. But methinks, if possible, I would fain have your Lady see him.——Yet, hold.——If you could procure me *Myrtilla's* dress and veil—I would undertake it myself.

Busy. We have settled it then——so, now leave me; as soon as I have put my Lady to bed you shall have it. I'll vouch for any thing you say or do, and you shall impose upon him in your own way. But, hark! Who's at the door?

Alis. 'Tis Mr. *Deggrell*. May he come in?

Busy.

Busy. By no means.—I can't, Sir, talk to you now. My Dame here, will inform you of my readiness to do you good offices. Let him know, Madam, that I cannot be seen to night.—In about an hour I shall have the dress ready for you. Go to him then, Dame, and fix your assignation. Away, I beg you, for I hear my Lady coming. [*Exit Alison.*] How can any mortal refuse to assist a fellow-creature in such a dreadful circumstance! There is no barbarity like a forced marriage. Such a wife is a perfect galley-slave; always in disagreeable, shocking company, and chained for life, to row one way and look another.

S C E N E II.

Myrtilla, Busy.

Myrtilla. **T**O what purpose have I given myself all this trouble? I am convinced I shall see nothing but my winding-sheet; and that must be a most horrid, shocking sight! Hark! Is not that a death-watch?

Busy. 'Tis only the watch your Ladyship lent me to put you in mind of the hour.

Myrt. I vow, *Busy*, the hour is so near, I tremble every joint of me. Well, what o'clock is it?

Busy. It wants two or three minutes of twelve.

Myrt. The cake here is ready, prepared too by the infallible receipt. Every thing upon this table I hope remains untouched, and in the very place I left it. Take off the cover. So. Now every thing is in order.

Busy. The ceremony is so near at hand, that it is now high time for me to leave you.

Myrt. Hold! Stay! I shall die if I am left alone. You shall not stir! I cannot support it.—Place yourself in the corner of the room. In that chair, yonder.

Busy.

Busy. But if, after the clock strikes twelve, one word should escape us, the whole charm is broken; and when we have any body to speak to, you know, Madam, words often slip from us without thinking. I'll be within call, Madam.

Myrt. I will have you stay. Sit you down in the place I bid you. Whatever you see or hear, say nothing.

Busy. I know my duty, Madam; for to be sure, that woman does not deserve to serve a Lady, who cannot be deaf, dumb, and blind whenever it is convenient. Now I will say that for myself—*[The clock strikes twelve.*

[As the clock is striking, Myrtilla, by signs, stops the discourse. She retires step by step, and seats herself at the table in a melancholy posture. Busy, in like manner, takes her post. Sir Harry Gauntlet enters, places himself in the chair over against Myrtilla; eats, and drinks; he then addresses her in dumb-show; she continues in the same posture; he now rises, approaches, and kneels.

S C E N E III.

Myrtilla, Busy, Sir Harry Gauntlet.

Sir Harry. **I**N short, Madam, you see destiny will have it so. Love pleads for me, and the aspect of the Planets favour me. What must be, must be. If the Incantation restrain your tongue, consent with your eyes; I don't insist upon a verbal declaration. What! both your tongue and eyes under command! Are you a woman? This is supernatural! Is this delicate hand real? *[He offers to take her hand, she shrieks, and runs out of the room.*

SCENE

S C E N E. IV.

Sir Harry Gauntlet, Busy.

Busy. **G**G, you unthinking creature; you have spoiled all. You had forgot you were a spirit.

Sir Harry. I'll follow her.

Busy. You will but make the matter worse. You will ruin the whole affair. What business had you to be talking?

Sir Harry. Why had you not told me so? One can never expect to gain upon a woman by silence, unless 'tis to let her talk without interruption; for women love to have talk always a going; when they are tired of talking themselves, they like to be talked to.

Busy. Hark! What noise was that?—As I live, the whole house is in an uproar. You will lose your mistress, your mistress her reputation, and I the reward you promised me. What shall we do?

Sir Harry. A good steady assurance may still impose upon her credulity. We may have another opportunity. Affirm, persist, that you neither saw or heard any thing. Superstition is inclined to believe what is improbable. In the mean time, I'll play the apparition and vanish.

Busy. Away! for company are coming in upon us.

SCENE

S C E N E V.

Myrtilla, Alison.

Myrtilla. **H**OW happy was it that you fell in my way! I was frightened to that degree—

Alif. Gracious! Madam, and what was the matter? Hath love committed burglary, and broken into your Bed-chamber? Sleeping or waking, to my thinking, a man is a good, convenient companion; believe me, precious, a husband will save you from all these frights.

Myrt. Bless me! Hold!—ah!—there he is again.

Alif. What? Where? Where is he? Gracious! Madam, you made me start.

Myrt. My dear Dame, I beg your pardon. It made so deep an impression upon me, that Fancy recalls my fears.

Alif. Do you see now, my dear Lady, these are some of the scare-crows that attend virginity. Whims, visions and vapours; just my case when I was a maid, as I hope for a help-mate!

Myrt. Busy. Where is the wench gone? *Busy! Busy!* where are you?

S S E N E VI.

Myrtilla, Alison, Busy

Busy. **M**ADAM.

Myrt. Where do you run? Why do you leave me? There is more vexation with these creatures! —I vow 'tis intolerable.

Busy.

S C E N E. IV.

Sir Harry Gauntlet, Busy.

Busy. **G**G, you unthinking creature; you have spoiled all. You had forgot you were a spirit.

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S S E N E VI.

Myrtilla, Alison, Busy

Busy. **M**ADAM.

Myrt. Where do you run? Why do you leave me? There is more vexation with these creatures! —I vow 'tis intolerable.

Busy.

Busy. By your Ladyship's looks, I thought you just falling into a fit, so I ran out to fetch cold water, strong water, your smelling-bottle or any thing.

Myrt. You saw him, I suppose, *Busy*?

Busy. What, Madam?

Myrt. The apparition.

Busy. The apparition! Dear Madam, it must be all fancy, for I neither saw nor heard any thing.

Myrt. 'Tis wonderful! 'Tis prodigious strange!

Alif. Bless us all! An apparition, said you?

Busy. I did indeed observe the candle of a blueish colour; and the room still smells a little of brimstone.

Alif. For certain, there is a kind of a sulphureous smell. Strong! very strong! gracious! don't you smell it, Madam?

Myrt. You seem frightened, Dame.

Alif. To be sure, Madam, I never saw any thing worse than myself in all my life. Frightened, said you? Alack-a-day! all my skittish days are over. When I was young, indeed, like other young girls, I thought fear very becoming; and I had then, Madam, though I say it, a very genteel scream.

Myrt. But, dear Dame, how can you talk so? Only think of an apparition, Madam! A manifest, plain apparition!

Alif. All this, believe me, comes of lying alone; and to be sure, 'tis a most fearful thing to lie alone! If you can get over the dread of marriage, take my word, the best cure for fear, is a husband.—What have we here! A cake, a bottle of wine, and St. *Agnes's* night too! Are these your pranks, Madam? 'Twas a ghost, my dear, I perceive of your own raising.

Myrt. Your contradicting my former fortune, Dame, drew me in to make this experiment.

Alif. And how do you like him? By your scream, one would have thought it had not been only the shadow of a man. Come, honey, here's to his health.

Nay!

Nay, friend, you may very decently pledge me, for by your own rule it must be a match.

Myrt. I tell you, I hate the fellow mortally.

Alif. So much the better for him, say I. He had better have your hate before marriage, than after; for the man, some time or other, must know a woman in all her humours.

Myrt. I had got the better of every passion but curiosity. Why did I revive this abominable creature in my imagination? There is a ring too in yonder snuff of the candle! How shall I get off from this affair?

Alif. A wedding one, by my troth! By that light, child, you must wear one!

Myrt. Do you believe then, Dame, that I must inevitably submit to this fortune?

Alif. Never take an aversion to the man before you are married to him. There is a time, Madam, for all things.

Myrt. But, perhaps, this may be all delusion, and my fancy may have imposed upon me.

Alif. By every thing you say or do, I see plainly you have man at heart; shew yourself a woman then, and follow your inclinations. But if you are still undetermined, here is now in the inn one of the most cunning men that ever drew circle; hear what he says. To be sure Madam, he foretold me two or three of my husbands, and described them to me to a hair. Lookye, bird, if you find him of a contrary opinion, you must do what none of us care to do, give up your own, and be married as soon as you can. Sure, Madam, you must have heard of Doctor *Astrolabe*!

Myrt. Many of my acquaintance have told me the strangest things of him! I own it would stagger me prodigiously, if his predictions to-morrow morning should tally with what I saw to-night. I really then don't know what I should do. Are all my things in order for going to bed? You will follow me, *Busy*. Good night to you, Dame.

Alif. Sweet dreams, lucky omens, and happy predictions attend you honey! [Exit Myrtilla.]

Buffy. As soon as I have put my Lady to bed, and can get away from her, under covert of her dress, you shall answer for her; and so Dame, I put Miss *Plowdon's* affair entirely under your management.

S C E N E VII.

Alison, Doggrell.

Alison. **L**ET me die if I don't like this young fool; and ten to one but in this adventure, I shall gain a double end, save *Florinda*, and serve myself.

Dog. You must pardon my impatience, Madam; for I cannot go to bed 'till I know the success of my poetry. Have you given her the verses?

Alif. She's won, she's charmed, she's thy own, my lad. As I hope for indulgence, she read them; like a lover. She languished; she sighed; she praised them; she repeated them; and she felt them to such a degree, that if I had not known they had been yours, I should have thought she had written them herself.

Dog. So then I may presume upon hope.

Alif. Upon certainty, my boy, if you pursue her in the way you ought. Poetical feet alone will never do. Why *Apollo* himself was forced to run Miss *Daphne* out of breath.—All women love a chase, and will twist and turn like a hare, though they resolve to be caught at last. By those little freaks and gambols they try whether their lovers be staunch, or not.

Dog. Every little circumstance touches the heart of a lover. Was she very inquisitive? Were you very particular and partial in your answers? I long to know the whole conversation.

Alif.

Alif. She asked at least above a hundred questions about you, before she had patience to stay for an answer; and I told her—Ah, *benedicite!* What did I not tell her! Gracious! Sure, Mr. *Doggrell*, I was almost in love with my own description. Now, as to men, you must know, there is no woman that knows me, but will take my recommendation. But, harkye, young man, let me know how you intend to answer your character? I have promised much for you, and if you do as you should, I know your youth with my experience must carry her. Tell me now how you mean to attack her?

Dog. In form, Madam: All great Ladies, I know, love form.

Alif. In public, I grant you, you can never treat her with too much of it; but in private, they will take it mortally ill of you, if you forgot they are women. *A tête à tête* puts us all upon the level, and love then is the only civility.

Dog. I doubt myself; for as yet I am but a novice in courtship.

Alif. Now, to my thinking, you seem so justly sensible of your own merits, that you can hardly want assurance.

Dog. But assurance may be interpreted as folly and insolence, and treated accordingly.

Alif. Never, stripling, when applied in proper season. With a competent stock of that, you can never be at a loss. Why, you would not, sure, put the woman to difficulties, and require it of her! Unless one of the parties have it, I pray you, which way can love go on?

Dog. May I hope then, Madam, for an interview?

Alif. Think of what she hopes from it.

Dog. But I fear my natural bashfulness.

Alif. Why then will you see her at all, and discredit yourself, and my recommendation! Raise your courage with a glass of wine, my lad, and don't be awkward.

ward. Go, do as I bid you; for I would fain have you make something of this affair. Does not an assignation at this secret hour of the night, give you a hint not to be too much upon the reserve? This at once puts you upon an easy footing:—if you distrust your own behaviour, drink yourself up to presence of mind, and, I'll answer for it, you win her.

S C E N E VIII.

Doggrell, Alifon, Busy.

Busy. MY Lady has a word or two to say to me in private, before she admits you, Sir.—So that I hope, Dame, you too will excuse me.—You'll find every thing ready for you in the next room.

[*Aside to Alifon.*

Alif. I cannot leave Mr. *Doggrell* in better hands; remember my advice, and don't be bashful. So, now I have delivered him over to your friendship, and good offices, I have, alack-a-day, nothing more to do but to go to bed and sleep.

[*Exit Alifon.*

Busy. As soon as my Lady is ready to receive you, I'll bring you word, Sir, and have the honour of introducing you.

Dog. Your civilities. Madam, are beyond recompence. I shall impatiently, Madam, attend your summons. In the mean time a bumper or two shall raise my courage, and inspirit my conversation.

[*Aside.*

SCENE

S C E N E IX.

Busy, Alison.

Alison. **H**AVE you secured the door? I long to play off this fool, and save Miss *Pewden*.

Busy. I always loved the girl, that's certain; but 'tis as much as my place is worth if my Lady should come to know of this frolic; so, my dear Dame, if ever any thing comes to light, you must take care to keep me out of the scrape.

Alif. Never doubt my discretion, Mrs. *Busy*.

Busy. So then—now, Dame, I'll prepare you for the part. Let me die, if I should care to put on the dress; I should be afraid it might prove ominous.

[*Dresses Alison in the veil.*]

Alif. There is nothing in outward appearance, girl. A cloak and band do not make a man religious; nor a prudish look, nor a Nun's habit, make a woman chaste. Till now I was ever a plain-dealer. Every woman hath her frailties, and the sin of hypocrisy was very seldom mine; but a diligent woman, and a good housewife, must turn her hand to every thing.

Busy. You will be sure to bring me the dress to-morrow before my Lady rises.

Alif. Depend upon it Mrs. *Busy*, I shall be punctual in every thing.

Busy. Now then, Dame, if you are ready, I'll go and introduce your lover, and then to bed. I shall be impatient to laugh over this adventure with you to-morrow.

[*Exit Busy.*]

Alif. Those have a rare, easy, indolent time of it, to be sure, whose inclinations grow old with their constitutions; but that is not my case. I should have a

fine time of it, i'fackins, to let custom and the world be judges of my constitution, which, in troth, hath worn out two brace and a half of brave jolly husbands already, and is yet never the worse for it. Alack-and-well-a-day, that ever love was fin, say I! But hold; I must now suit my talk to the formality of my habit.

S C E N E X.

Alison, Busy, Doggrell.

Busy. YOU were in the right indeed, Sir, to finish your bottle. That last bumper will help to keep up the discourse, and give a spur to your gallantry. Mr. *Doggrell*, Madam.

Alif. Don't leave the candles flaring in my eyes—Set them upon yonder table.—When I want you, *Busy*, I shall call. But now I think on't you may go to bed. I shall want you no more to-night. [*Exit Busy.*] Mr. *Doggrell*, your servant.

Dog. The joy, the transport, the hurry of spirits, the wishes, the fears, that perplex a passionate lover, have quite disconcerted me. What shall I say? How shall I address you? Madam——Madam.—I hope you will pardon my confusion, and——and——

Alif. I am sure I can hardly pardon myself. Don't you think me very odd, Mr. *D'Ogrelle* in trusting myself and you with such an uncommon visit? But I beg you, Sir, don't talk to me of wishes, fears, and hurry of spirits. Now you may think it all affectation; but I really can't abide all such sort of immodest expressions. I vow, Mr. *D'Ogrelle*, I think your verses charming; I wish you had chosen a more agreeable subject.

Dog. The verses, Madam, were none of mine. Love dictated them, I only transcribed them: In the attempt

attempt I may be censured as a poet, but ought to be excused as a lover.

Alif. But, dear Mr. *D'Ogrelle*, how shall I excuse myself for this indiscretion? All you fine men are apt to put strange interpretations upon the little innocent liberties of women. I mortally hate myself now for what I have done. I know you must think me most monstrously ridiculous. But if you give it the most malicious turn, (as a *woman* would give it,) I blush to guess what you must think of me.

Dog. I'll tell you, Madam, sincerely what I do think of you. I see you as a lover, I think of you as a lover.

Alif. Oh! Dear Sir, don't think of me in that way, I beg it of you: And now we are alone, to talk to me of love too! I knew you were thinking of what you should not think of.

Dog. Since then you know my thoughts——

Alif. Why, sure you won't have the assurance to confess them! By your thinking this way of me, I know you must have a prodigious stock of vanity; for those men that have too good an opinion of themselves, have always too bad a one of women.

Dog. Nay, Madam; now you oblige me to explain myself.——If honourable love——

Alif. But, dear Sir, — consider we are alone. Consider too, that it is not proper and decent for a woman of my cloth to hear every thing. But when one hath done an indiscreet thing, one never knows where it will end. I vow, I wish I had never seen you.

Dog. What are you afraid of, dear Madam? What have you done?

Alif. Nay, I tremble only to think what you may do.

Dog. But sure, Madam, there are some little innocent liberties that are allowed in the most discreet address. For example, Madam, the liberty of glances was never denied a lover. Let this malicious cloud then no longer eclipse the sunshine of your beauty.

Alif.

Alif. Desist, I beg you. These liberties do not become you, Sir.

Dog. Why not become me, Madam? I shall behave myself like a Gentleman.

Alif. To tell one so too is very impudent. You know, Mr. *D'Ogrelle*, that is a very impudent expression. I might, indeed, have expected all this.—But it is too late now.

Dog. My addressees, Madam, are honourable. My family, my estate, are by no means contemptible. I propose myself as a husband.

Alif. As a husband! That, indeed, is a very different behaviour. I vow I was horribly frightened, when you talk'd of behaving yourself like a Gentleman.

Dog. Consider the proposal, Madam. I hope, Madam, you are convinced that I love you.

Alif. Convinced! I don't know what you mean. Convinced! I am, sure Sir, I have allowed you no liberties.

Dog. By this hand, I swear I love you. [*Kisses it.*]

Alif. Really, Mr. *D'Ogrelle*, you are monstrous rude. Let my hand go; do, dear Mr. *D'Ogrelle*, now do.—I dare not make a noise at this time of night, and that, to be sure, you know by your behaviour.

Dog. You mistake me, Madam; my address is honourable.

Alif. You may be sure, Mr. *D'Ogrelle*, whatever I think, I never shall tell you that I like you, therefore, pray, ask no more questions. Though, indeed, if I were inclined to marriage——But have done, dear Mr. *D'Ogrelle*; for I will not be asked any more questions about any such kind of thing.

Dog. In this room, Madam, our conversation may, perhaps, be overheard.

Alif. By no means, Sir——I vow I won't trust you in my bedchamber. Yet after all, 'tis disagreeable too to have all the world overhear our discourse. I take it for granted, Sir, you won't be rude.—But from a Nunnery

Nunnery to a husband, methinks, is too desperate a transition. If it were not so late—To-morrow—Well then——To-morrow I will allow you to talk to me—and so, Sir, good night to you.—What do you mean? I beg you, Sir, don't be impertinent.—I hate myself now for having so much curiosity——For once then I will trust myself to your civility;——For I must hear what you can say for yourself. Yet, I own, 'tis not very discreet of me.

There's double danger in an assignation;
Though we resist the man's sollicitation,
We're often lost by woman's inclination.

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A C T IV.

S C E N E I.

Sir Harry Gauntlet, Busy.

Busy. **D**OCTOR *Astrolabe* will be here this minute; for my Lady appointed him in this room at this hour. I'll keep her from breaking in upon you till you have brib'd him to your interest. If this affair be rightly carried on (though she hath refused you so often) you have her; I know she will consent the first time you see her. I have expected you here with the utmost impatience. Your stay might have spoiled our whole scheme.

Sir Harry.

Sir *Harry*. I have been unluckily fastened upon by an impertinent University acquaintance, and it was with the utmost difficulty (he was so full of his amours and his poetry) that I got rid of him. And, at last, I was obliged to promise him a hearing, or he would have followed me.

Buſy. *D'Ogrelle*. Is not that his name?

Sir *Harry*. Ay, *Doggrell*.

Buſy. A most ridiculous conceited creature! I have not time now to tell you his story; for Doctor *Astrolabe*, I see, is coming. I'll keep my Lady off, to give you what time I can to prepare the scheme. Success attend you.

S C E N E II.

Sir *Harry* Gauntlet, *Astrolabe*.

Astrolabe. **I** Profess, I expected to have found a Lady. In order to wait upon you, Sir, I was forced to interrupt my studies. I do, indeed, sometimes wait upon Ladies in their own apartments; but the Gentlemen always come to mine. You took me off from calculating a great Lady's nativity; and the life of most Ladies is extremely perplexed and intricate. 'Tis a hard thing to trace them through all their unaccountable ways of life! And really, Sir, to tell what any woman will do, is a study exceedingly difficult, because even but an hour beforehand, 'tis what they themselves cannot tell you. Indeed, Sir, I was very sorry to be interrupted.

Sir *Harry*. But an interruption in a regular way, Doctor. Why the greatest lawyers and physicians are always ready to excuse this sort of interruptions.

[*Fees him.*]

Astro.

Astro. O dear, Sir!—This is what I never can take ill from any gentleman. I am willing to oblige as far as lies within the circumference of my art, and especially a person who hath applied to me in so handsome a manner. Let me know how I can serve you. Propose your business.

Sir Harry. I know, Doctor, that you are provided with general answers for the common questions of your customers, and I grant you it should be so; 'tis in the way of business. But that is not my affair; I want your assistance as a friend.

Astro. You have the appearance of so much honour, Sir, that you cannot mean to draw me in to expose and betray myself. If you have any commands, let me know in what manner I can be useful to you.

Sir Harry. I must acquaint you then, Doctor, that I am in love with a lady who is entirely governed by superstition. 'Twas she that sent for you, to consult you about her marriage. What I want, Doctor, is to personate you, and to answer all her questions. I know the foretelling this match will make your fortune as well as mine, for you shall have all the credit of it.

Astro. I trust myself and my profession in your hands.

Sir Harry. As for the science, Doctor, I shall not disparage it. I have the twelve signs by heart, my memory is pretty well stocked with the cant phrases of Astrology, and I shall take care to be most learnedly unintelligible.

Astro. You know the science so thoroughly, Sir, that one would think you had made it your profession. This, Sir, in our way, I call my hieroglyphical Cap.

[Puts it on Sir Harry's head.]

This, Sir, is the wand of incantation.

[Gives him the Wand.]

It gives a charming, diabolical air to all the gibberish we utter; and when you have put on my gown, I have at once invested you with all my learning.

Sir Harry.

Sir *Harry*. But I should have a face too, proper to the habit. A beard and a pair of whiskers would give a magical turn to my countenance, and make my figure altogether more awful and solemn. Have you not a spare beard for a friend?

Astro. I have laid myself open to you, Sir, and shall confide in you in every thing. Rather than you shall be at a loss for so necessary a dignity, I will divest my own chin of its science. You now see a man reduced by extravagance, and skulking from his creditors. Other people have lived upon my follies and now I am living upon the follies of others. To your post, Sir! the ladies are coming. If I am seen in this condition, I may be discovered; and, in this business, our reputation is as tender as a lady's; 'tis never to be regained, if ever we are found out.

S C E N E III.

Sir Harry Gauntlet, Myrtille, Busy, Alison.

Alis. **W**HY how now, Doctor! Don't you remember your old acquaintance? Good lack, good lack! you are most strangely altered.

Sir *Harry*. Watching and reading the stars, Madam, are studies that wear a man's constitution most consumedly. 'Tis not only women, you see, that are given to change, every thing is variable; kingdoms, friends, and fashions; all change.

Myr. Is your name *Astrolabe*, Sir?

Sir *Harry*. Yes, Madam, I am known and fought after by the name of Doctor *Astrolabe*. *Germany* had the honour of my birth, and *Scorpio* was ascendant at my nativity. I studied the occult sciences under an *Egyptian* necromancer. I was born an adept, and have done wonders from my cradle, for I am not only the
seventh

seventh son, but the son of the seventh son. To give a sketch of my proficiency, your ladyship must observe—

Busy. There was a stroke of art! your ladyship! How could he know she had a title? He must be a most prodigious great man to be sure.

Myrt. I won't have you talk, *Busy*. Have done with your impertinent remarks, and be silent.

Sir Harry. My head, Madam, is a perfect cœlestial microcosm, like the concave and the convex of the heavens, lined with planets, and powdered with constellations. Let your question be within my cyclopede. But I love not to puzzle ladies with terms of art. Your business, Madam, is inscribed in your forehead, and the fates decree your happiness. Why will you oppose and struggle against your stars? For, do what you will, you must be happy at last.

Myrt. Since you pretend, Doctor, to be acquainted with my affairs, I suppose you are not a stranger to my name.

Sir Harry. Your ladyship's name (but questions of this kind are mere trifles;) let me see, it begins, ay, the first letter of it is an M. It will take up time; but if you will have me proceed, I could go through all the three syllables.

Myrt. You need not.—This is most prodigiously astonishing!—But, Doctor, my business, I pray?

Sir Harry. Your business, Madam, is now upon the crisis. Every thing that was retrograde, now tends to a happy conjunction. Your business, let me see, lies in *Aries*, *Taurus*, and *Capricorn*, that is to say, the signs of marriage.

Myrt. Then I am married, I presume, Doctor?

Sir Harry. I presume, Lady, you mean to mislead me. The matrimonial hour is nearer than you imagine. You are just now entering the house of marriage. Don't be concerned, Madam, there is nothing shocking in the appearance, for you are not married to him

yet. The man, Madam, who seems the most unlikely person in the world at present, will have you. But most marriages, indeed, at first have that appearance.

Myrt. Hath this unlikely gentleman, I pray, Doctor, ever made his applications?

Sir Harry. Last night, Madam——by the hour of his visit, it might be a dream, (but of this I will not be positive) yet last night, Madam, I affirm you saw him; and it will not be long, Madam, before you will see him again;—sooner than you imagine. Your house of marriage, indeed, is very uncommon, and almost incredible, for it begins in aversion, and ends in love. 'Tis to no purpose to hold out! for that very man must be your husband.

Myrt. Must be! I hate that *must be*. Sure, Doctor, you must think me of an unaccountable complying temper, and a very particular sort of woman, to do any thing because I must!

Sir Harry. Believe me, Madam, so many hours as you defend yourself from marriage, so many happy ones you strike out of the register of your nativity. As I told you before, Madam, your love is very particular, for it will strengthen by marriage.

Myrt. Why really, Doctor, as for the gentleman there are very few women but what would like him: But—nay—since you say I must—if ever he falls in my way—I shall not endeavour to set myself against him.

Sir Harry. Indeed, Madam, you had better be easy with the man you are to live with. I have performed my part. You know your fortune. So I say no more.

Myrt. If I must then give up all thoughts of a nunnery, 'tis a disappointment; but I'll try to bear it, and resign myself to matrimony. You must shew me to my company, Doctor; but, first, give me leave to return you thanks. [Fees him.

[Exit Myrtilla. *Sir Harry returns.*

Sir Harry. So: The ladies, at last, are all fairly dismissed. Enter

Enter Astrolabe.

Astro. You have played the part, Sir, with so much judgement, that it must turn out to my reputation; and I think it cannot fail of answering all your wishes.

Sir Harry. For this fee, Sir, you are obliged to the lady. I hope my success will soon lay an obligation on me to reward you in a more particular manner.

Astro. We must remove from this room; you may more conveniently adjust yourself in mine. The landlord, I see, is coming this way, and company with him.

S C E N E V.

Spigot, Merit, Doggrell.

Spigot. **H**AVE but patience, dear Mr. Merit; the thing, I tell you, will do at last.

Merit. But which way, my good landlord, (granting she had inclination,) can she escape, or can I relieve her? *Plowden* never leaves her alone a moment.

Enter Doggrell.

Dog. Sir, I beg your pardon. I have a little business with my landlord; I shall not detain him. May one talk before him? You know one would not trust every body. [To Spigot.]

Spig. You saw him with me last night. I'll be answerable for him. You are safe, Sir.

Dog. Nay, for that matter, the affair cannot be long a secret.

Merit. I hate to interrupt conversation.

Dog. And so do I. I vow you shall not stir. Excuse me, Sir; I have no scruple of speaking before you.

Merit. Or before any body.

[Aside.]
Dog.

Dog. The Lady, Mr. *Spigot*, hath consented.

Merit. Consented! 'tis impossible.

Spig. Consented, say you?

Dog. Fond of me to distraction, that's all!

Spig. But are you, Sir, as fond of her?

Dog. This very morning you will have good reason to think so. You seem to wonder at her, landlord.

Spig. No, Sir. I wonder at you.

Dog. You thought then I would not have pushed the affair so far as marriage.

Spig. Wonder at you! Why, all the world, Sir, will wonder at you. What! give up such an agreeable, such an honourable pursuit! and for *Plowdon's* daughter! Why, really, considering the fair way you were in last night, 'tis very astonishing.

Dog. You are out, landlord. What do you mean? Give up the pursuit, man! Why, I have caught her.

Spig. Is *Myrtilla*, then the lady you have been talking of?

Dog. The very same.

Merit. Sir, I wish you joy with all my heart.

Dog. Old *Plowdon* is but just gone from me. I talked to him in my rattling way, of my being to be married. The Put bit just like my landlord here, and is gone off very well satisfied that it can be with nobody but his daughter.

Spig. I shall have the honour, I hope, of providing your wedding dinner.

Dog. To be sure, my good landlord; and let it be a very handsome one. The old fellow's surprise and choler will be very entertaining; so that till then I beg you, gentlemen, to keep the secret. You will do me the honour I hope, Sir, to dine with me. [*To Merit.*] I have still time enough upon my hands before the happy hour. Would Sir *Harry Gauntlet* were in the way! For I must see him. You saw me, landlord, with a gentleman just now, who was called away upon business. Can you tell me where I may find him?

Spig.

Spig. I have not seen him since.

Dog. I must seek him out. You'll excuse me, Sir, that I leave you so abruptly. [*Exit Doggrell.*]

Spig. You are perfectly easy now upon his account: your rival, you see, is disposed of. I'll make it my business, from time to time, to inform you how matters go, that the lady (when she takes her flight) may find her mate. Yonder is Mr. *Doggrell's* lady walking this way, in earnest conversation with her maid; as he hath no business with your mistress, I suppose you have none with his. Come with me, then, Sir: that you may be in the way: I'll shew you a convenient post, and then seek out for intelligence.

S C E N E VI.

Myrtilla, Busy.

Busy. **N**AY, dear Madam, excuse me! I persuade you to nothing. A match-maker is a very unthankful office. Serve your friend that way, and you always lose her; so I wash my hands of the whole affair. But so much I will say, that, to my thinking, any husband is better than a nunnery; for, be it as it will, you will then have frequent opportunities of pleasing yourself.

Myrt. As incredulous a thing as thou art, *Busy*, I am positive the Doctor must have convinced thee; and were I to see him, really I don't know—Yes I *do know* what would become of me. The creature is grown intolerably agreeable to me. Since I must live in the world, what have I to do with this dress? I hate hypocrisy. Have I no other cloaths with me? Don't be so prodigiously surprized, *Busy*; for I own I have changed my resolution.

Y 3

Busy

Busy. Where, dear Madam, can be the surprize? for I have long known that no woman is tied down to a resolution. And, indeed, why should she? for as fast as she breaks one, she has the pleasure of making another. Then there's a sort of contradiction in it too, and self-contradiction is amusing enough—when a woman can get no better.

Myrt. But you don't answer me, *Busy*. Have I any thing with me besides these hideous dismal things to put on?

Busy. Yes, Madam, your ladyship's last new gown and petticoat. But I thought you so near a nunnery, that I looked upon them as my own. How uncertain are human expectations!

Myrt. I feel so forward and so impudent, that I vow I hate myself. Don't I blush, *Busy*? The fellow runs in my head strangely. I always thought that suit as becoming as any thing I have.

Busy. Your ladyship knows I always thought so.

Myrt. Really, after all, a nunnery is ridiculous. I know you think so. A woman only exposes herself by it; for 'tis telling the world her inclinations are so strong that she dares not trust them. 'Tis to no purpose to ask me his name; for I never will own it till I see him again. But I think 'tis impossible the thing can happen.

Busy. If 'tis the man you like best, I have a shrewd guess.

Myrt. Now without a joke, *Busy*, the whole thing is most prodigiouly surprizing. Doctor *Astrelabe* promised he would renew his addresses in person, and very suddenly too. Now if this circumstance should agree with last night's experiment, what can a woman do? To be sure I must have him. The first time he proposes himself, I know I shall be horribly impudent, and consent. Hah!

SCENE

S C E N E VII.

Myrtilla, Busy, Sir Harry Gauntlet.

Busy. **T**O be sure, Madam, I never saw an apparition before in all my life! Don't think it fancy, for I vow I see him as plain as if he were really alive. Heaven, bless me, Madam, don't you see him? He's coming towards us. But now I see him nearer; don't be frighten'd, for 'tis only a man. 'Tis he himself.

Sir Harry. Do I dream still? Or hath fortune guided me to my wishes? May I presume, Madam, to give credit to my eyes, and call you *Myrtilla*?

Myrt. Who, after this, will ever call in question the truth of art-magic? Never was any thing so surprizing. You are not deceiv'd *Sir Harry*; my name is *Myrtilla*.

Sir Harry. Every thing concurs; every thing is prodigious. In the habit of a Nun too! From this hour I shall look upon dreams as sacred. Last night, Madam, after the fatigue of a stormy passage, I landed at *Dover*, and there in my sleep I saw you, I made love to you, I offered to kiss your hand; you snatched it from me, and flew out of the room; in struggling, and not being able to stir to pursue you, I waked; but after that Madam, in my morning-dream, I saw you kind and consenting; and your ladyship hath often told me, that morning dreams were always true.

Myrt. I hope you have breakfasted, *Sir Harry*; for I can't endure that any body should tell their dreams when they are fasting. Considering what hath happened to me, you must allow, *Busy*, this is wonderful. Destiny, indeed, seems to throw you in my way in spite of my resolution. You know, *Sir Harry*, it will be to no purpose to persist. As often as you have asked, you know you have had a refusal.

Sir Harry.

Sir Harry. I know, Madam, 'tis what you have very often offered me; and though you offer it again, I find in my heart I shall never take it.

Myrt. How can you, *Sir Harry*, be so provoking? Suppose I were weak enough to listen to you, could you be so barbarous as to hinder my vow? Would you seduce me from being a Saint?

Sir Harry. Why in so much haste, Madam? Be a Woman first, and think of that afterwards.

Myrt. And have you really, *Sir Harry*, thought of me while you were abroad? Now that is what I can have no notion of. You must imagine me very credulous, indeed, if you think to persuade me you have been constant in this long absence. I believe, in dreams, in fairies, in visions, in apparitions, and those things; but I am not such a fool to believe in Man, who I know is deceiving.

Sir Harry. All women are certainly in the right to insist upon constancy in a husband, for one of the two ought to have it; and why do we marry, but to supply each other's wants?

Myrt. You have surprised me in a mighty odd humour, and I fear I shall be very indiscreet. But I must and will tell it you. You must know then, the whim led me this morning to consult a fortune-teller, who appeared very zealous in your interest. He promised me happiness, and a world of fine things.

Sir Harry. He promised then as if he had known my inclinations. You know, Madam, 'tis what I have promised you a thousand times—Indeed, Madam, you'll find me responsible.

Myrt. Don't grow impertinent.

Sir Harry. How can you be so very cruel?

Myrt. Nay, dear *Sir Harry*, you see I am not so positive and so peremptory as I used to be; and is not that enough for you? But fortune will have it so, and it must come out at last; and so, *Sir Harry*,—you know what I mean.

Sir Harry.

Sir Harry. You will defer my happiness no longer.

Myrt. I won't say so; but I won't contradict you. Now you know my mind. If I had not given my word so hastily, to be sure I should never have done it. I hope, *Sir Harry*, I shall find you here. I cannot bear to be seen in this dismal, fusty way. You must excuse me for a minute or two; for I want to be dressed again like a christian. *Busy*, follow me. You will be sure, *Sir Harry*, to be constant till I come back.

SCENE VIII.

Sir Harry Gauntlet, Busy, Doggrell.

Busy. **T**HE affair is done. You have her. Clinch it while you may. Never take a woman's word when you may take the woman. [*Exit Busy.*]

Sir Harry. She will have at least nine or ten minutes to change her mind, and that's a long while. I shall have good luck if she hold out. If I depended upon her temper alone, it would be impossible. All my hope and hold are in her superstition.—Was ever any thing so unlucky? Here's that pestering, teasing young fellow again. I shall be forced to affront him, to get rid of him.

Dog. Dear *Sir Harry*, your servant. I have been enquiring for you; I have been looking for you; and to find you quite disengaged from all business, is just now very lucky; for I hate to interrupt any body. *Sir Harry*, I must beg a favour of you.

Sir Harry. Upon my word, Sir, I have business.

Dog. But it is impossible it can be so pressing as mine. I want a friend, *Sir Harry*; but how can I say I want a friend, when I have found you?

Sir Harry. Nay pr'ythee, *Doggrell*—It can never be so pressing, but in the afternoon—in the evening it will be time enough.

Dog.

Dog. Do but hear me, Sir, and you will be convinced. Nay, you must hear me.

Sir Harry. Well, Sir——since I must.

Dog. I know you are secret. I must acquaint you then, Sir, that last night I fell in love, I addressed, and I vanquished.

Sir Harry. And what is all this to me, I pray you?—So you are married, and I am to wish you joy. Is not that the thing?

Dog. Promised, betrothed, and all that; but I say no more. I am immediately going to give her personal security. The honour of having you, *Sir Harry*, a witness to the contract——

Sir Harry. At any other time I should not have refused you, but just now it is impossible; and you must excuse me.

Dog. That then I give up. But you must not deny me a minute or two, while I read a couple of stanza's that I wrote this morning. Metre subdued her, and metre shall maintain the conquest. Do, dear *Sir Harry*, comply with me; for I long to have your opinion before she sees them.

Sir Harry. At any other time you may command me.

Dog. Now, *Sir Harry*; dear *Sir Harry* now. 'Tis impossible a minute or two can be of that consequence. 'Tis a sort of an Ode of triumph: Your reading will do it justice. [Gives a paper.]

Sir Harry. Ye Gods! Did *Jove* e'er taste such charms,
When prest in fair *Alcmena's* arms?
I'm sure it could not be!
A triple night would not have done:
He would have blotted out the Sun
Had he been pleas'd like me.

[Reads carelessly.]

Dog.

Dog. Not so fast, I beseech you, Sir *Harry*. Mark the harmony and the easy cadence that warbles through the whole stanza.—

Ye Gods! did *Jove*, &c. [*Repeats affectedly, and follows Sir Harry, who appears very uneasy.*]

Soft as the *Italian*!—Then it starts into the Heavens. *Ye Gods!* perfectly *Pindaric*!

A triple night would not have done.

That *triple* is one of the most happy epithets: 'tis worth a whole poem of most of the modern Authors.

Sir Harry. You might spare your comment, Sir: for the beauties lie so superficially apparent, that there is no room for criticism.—So now, Sir, I hope you have done with me.

Dog. Nay 'tis but one stanza more. I am amazed you can have so little curiosity.

Sir Harry. In my own defence then! [*Aside.*]

Beneath the fable veil's disguise,
Had you not hid your killing eyes,
It had been worse for me.

My *Nun* had then appear'd like *Jove*,
I had been light'ning-struck for love,
And dy'd like *Semele*.

A *Nun*, Sir?

Dog. 'Tis always unsafe to trust any body with half a secret; for they then generally tell more than the whole. I wonder how I could be so unguarded. Since we are to be married, you know 'tis exposing nobody more than myself. You must have heard of a lady whose name is *Myrtilla*.—But don't you think the last stanza very prettily turned.

Sir Harry. No wonder she was in such haste to consent. [*Aside.*]

Dog. Is not the allusion to *Semele* elegant and genteel?
Sir Harry

Sir Harry. After what has passed, she is afraid the fool might fly off when he comes to the brink of marriage, and so the jilt would make sure of me. [*Aside.*]

Dog. How good poetry can strike a man of taste! quite rapt and lost in the sublime!

Sir Harry. This coxcomb has saved me from having every coxcomb in town for my friend; for they all like to put themselves upon an easy footing with the husband. [*Aside.*]

Dog. Nay, 'tis a pity to interrupt his admiration. Though I cannot have your company now, I hope, *Sir Harry*, you are not engaged to-day at dinner. You know 'tis upon a particular occasion, and you must not deny me. I take it for granted you will come——
Pardon me, *Sir*, for this intrusion. Your Servant.

S C E N E IX.

Sir Harry Gauntlet, Myrtilla, Busy.

Myrtilla. **T**HAT is a hideous conceited fellow; I wonder how you could be entertained with him. I was too well-bred, you see, to break in upon the conversation.

Sir Harry. What an unaccountable mysterious creature is woman? [*Aside.*] Pray, Madam, how long has your ladyship been acquainted with that Gentleman?

Myrt. Last night was the first time I ever saw him.

Sir Harry. He told me indeed it was a very sudden acquaintance.

Myrt. How can you, *Sir Harry*, be so ridiculous to talk gravely about him? You know the fellow is a fool.

Sir

Sir Harry. You talk of fools, and with fools every day, Madam, without this violent flutter. What has discomposed you thus?

Myrt. You grow intolerable. I am glad you have shewn me such early proof of your temper and manners. What means the creature, *Busy*? I am obliged to you, *Sir Harry*, for this ill-bred capricious behaviour; it hath saved me from having any more of it for the future.

S C E N E X.

Sir Harry Gauntlet, Busy.

Busy. **I**Ndeed, I winked, I made signs; and all to no purpose. Seriously I believe you have ruined the whole affair. I never was more vexed in all my life. What could you mean by that provoking behaviour?

Sir Harry. Such an uncommon unaccountable jilt! For ought I know, you too may be an accomplice. After what passed last night, I would by no means prevent *Doggrell's* taking upon him the title of husband.

Busy. You may remember, *Sir Harry*, that I hinted to you that I had something to tell you about that fool. All I have time to say now, is, that Dame *Alison* last night borrowed my Lady's habit of me out of a frolick, to impose upon him; and his folly and vanity hath now imposed upon himself and you too. O' my conscience she was in such a pettish way, that I fear she won't easily be reconciled.

Sir Harry. Though the fellow is a fool, she is a woman——And how could I know? What we fear, we are very apt to believe.

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Busy.

Busy. How jealousy misleads all young men! Beware of this same passion, I beg you, Sir, after matrimony. 'Tis a perfect ghost in a house that can never be laid.

Sir Harry. The thing will be only made worse by endeavouring to explain it: so, dear Mrs. *Busy*, you must help me out.

Busy. Upon my word, *Sir Harry*, it was too much. If you had been her husband and been used to her talk for twenty years together, you could not have seen and heard her with more indifference. But, be assured, *Sir Harry*, you shall always find a real friend in me.

Sir Harry. If a good convenient husband fell in your way, (I mean a rich one,) I think, my dear, you are not absolutely determined against matrimony.

Busy. Why should I be more scrupulous than the rest of my sex? I have not vanity enough to risque myself and my lovers like a coquette. Should I neglect a good offer, the fate of an old maid might too late convince me of my folly.

Sir Harry. Mr. *Doggrell*, girl, is a man of an estate. The Nun he had an assignation with last night he is to marry this morning.

Busy. Is it so then, Dame? ——— I was forced indeed to fetch the dress from her; and she would not part with it till I promised to dress her out again to-day to carry on the joke. No wonder the old lady was so zealous about it.

Sir Harry. Now if you will secure the habit, and give him a meeting, the habit will secure the man. I am sure the scheme is practicable, and I really think you should undertake it.

Busy. And I really think so too. My good Dame, I find, has been a little too free in this affair; and for not trusting me, she deserves to be outwitted. While I have the habit in my possession, she cannot interfere with me. So I'll about it this moment. But here comes my Lady, and I dare not be seen with you. Cu-

riosity

riosity will not let me go yet. I must listen ; for I long to hear how you will get over this affair.

S C E N E XI.

Sir Harry Gauntlet, Myrtilla.

Myrt. IF I had thought you were here still, I assure you, Sir, I should not have returned this way so soon. Nay, never endeavour to excuse yourself, 'twill be to no purpose.

Sir Harry. I am unhappy, Madam, to be in disgrace with you ; but I can never think of excusing myself when I am not conscious that I ever offended.

Myrt. Which way then can you account for your behaviour ?

Sir Harry. That I had been conversing with a fool, and by remembering the conversation, had brought away some of his folly with me. His vanity talked in so familiar a way of you, that I wanted to give you a caution, and you thought I had ill opinion enough of you to believe him, and ill manners enough at the same time to reproach you.

Myrt. But don't you yourself think that your careless indifferent way must have surprized me most prodigiously ?

Sir Harry. When I knew my own thoughts and heart I was surprized you could take any thing ill of me.

Myrt. I was determined never to forgive you—— But I am grown a changeling, I can determine upon nothing.

Sir Harry. Consider, Madam, destiny hath confirmed our marriage.——All you can do, is but to delay it.

Myrt. It would be more handsome and obliging, I confess, to make my love a present; yours may wear out too perhaps by tedious expectation. But, upon my word, Sir *Harry*, I can never say directly what you would have me.

Sir Harry. Let your heart then accompany your hand, and double the value of the gift by putting me in present possession.

Myrt. Nay, there's no pleasure in being obstinate, when one knows one shall bring nothing about by it.

Sir Harry. Let us readily and cheerfully then accept the fortune the stars have allotted for us.

Myrt. You find, Sir *Harry*, that I am not at my own disposal. *Busy!* Where is the girl?

Enter Busy.

Busy. Madam!

Myrt. How can I be so ridiculous? I really begin to believe I am in earnest. Sir *Harry* is most abominably teasing; say what I will, I find he will persist—and since it is decreed——

Sir Harry. There is a Clergyman of my acquaintance in t'other room.

Myrt. Where is the creature going?

Sir Harry. You'll shew him to your Lady's apartment.

Myrt. Have I given you any orders?

Sir Harry. Give me leave, Madam, to attend you.

Myrt. Stay. [To *Busy*.

Sir Harry. From this hour I date my happiness.

Myrt. Well then——You may—— [To *Busy*.

Sir Harry. I shall be very impatient, Mrs. *Busy*.

Myrt. Do what Sir *Harry* bids you. [To *Busy*.

[Exit Sir *Harry*, leading *Myrtilla*.

Busy. When one is resolved to do a rash thing, one would chuse to do it suddenly and inconsiderately, for fear

fear of prevention ; one has always time enough to think of it afterwards. Money influences and governs us all. What is there but men and women will venture for it ? Ignominy, hanging, marriage. Well, till now I never thought I had so much courage. Which of us two now shall be first served, my lady or myself ? Servants have seldom any doubt upon this point. But since it is the last duty I shall do in place, (first of all, begging pardon of all servants whatsoever, from the highest to the lowest,) I will break through the rules of practice ; and for once

I'll act with zeal that never yet was shewn ;
First do my Lady's job, and next my own.



A C T V.

S C E N E I.

Plowdon's Room.

Plowdon, Hubert.

Plowdon. FATHER *Hubert*, this is very unkind of you——Nay pr'ythee, Father !——you must and shall hear me.

Hub. I am not asleep, master *Plowdon*. That wicked Chamberlain without doubt is an enemy to the Church, and it was in contempt of the function that he lodged me over the stables. What with the horses, the carriers, and the hostler, I had not a wink of sleep ; and I

was so angry, that for swearing and calling names I could not (as indeed I ought) spend the night in devotion.

Plowd. Believe me, Father, a cup of wine will refresh you——That was well done——Now I can talk to you. You must know then, *Frank* has complied, but my wench hath her mother's spirit, and is as obstinate as ever. You must bring her to reason. Talk to her; preach to her; frighten her. Of all men alive 'tis not for me to talk to her; why, a wench who will contradict no body else, will contradict her father. They are upon the same easy foot with a father, as a wife is with her husband——Do you mind me?

Hub. Dear Sir, I beg your pardon. [*Drinks.*]

Plowd. Hear me but a moment, father. Mark me: This then is the case; I have considered that while the ceremony of matrimony is administering, 'tis necessary the man and wife should appear to agree.—Nodding again, Father!

Hub. I hear you, Sir. Indeed, Mr. *Plowdon* it was only a nod of assent to what you were saying.

Plowd. Now, while you preach my daughter into obedience, I'll go and bring *Frank* hither; and the instant she consents, you shall nick them, slap-dash with the ceremony.

Hub. Slap-dash with the ceremony——I heard you, master *Plowdon*; and I shall exhort her to take a husband slap-dash with the ceremony.

Plowd. This key, Father, is the only security I have of her duty; and this, putting confidence in the strength of your virtue, I deliver into your possession.

Hub. Really, I never was more sleepy; but the fit is now over, and you may rely on my pious endeavours.

Plowd. As soon as I am gone, you will take the opportunity of talking with her; and, at my return with *Frank*, I hope to find her in a good disposition. Be watchful, be vigilant, Father; for I trust you with a woman.

SCENE

S C E N E II.

Hubert, Florinda.

Hubert. **T**O persuade a woman against her inclination! My negotiation will, I am afraid, be attended with some difficulties. Inclination is impregnable; it will hold out against the strongest attacks of eloquence and reason. Then, to persuade a young girl that her father knows what is most convenient for her; that it is undutiful to chuse a husband for herself; that she must love with discretion; that she must trust her father; that she must have no little private schemes of her own! Impossibilities, all impossibilities! I know the young hussy will in her heart only laugh at me. Yet, though the undertaking be desperate, we must discharge our duty. *[Unlocks the door.*

Enter Florinda.

Hub. I hope, young Lady, you have no other objection to Mr. *Doggrell* but that he is of your father's proposing.

Flor. The fellow is a fool, I tell you, and I hate him.

Hub. Why you would not surely, child, chuse a husband for his wisdom! Consult the married women of your acquaintance, and they will tell you 'tis sometimes very inconvenient; you will be more liable to be found out. Obey your father's commands, young Lady, and you will have a better chance to command your husband——And so, Madam, you will consent that Mr. *Doggrell*——I beg your pardon, Madam——I was somewhat overtaken with sleep——I had not one wink
all

all night long——Drowfiness had almost broken the thread of my argument——As I was saying, Madam——

Flor. Sit you down, Father *Hubert*. Cheer up your spirits with a glass of wine. Your judgement, Sir, must tell you that love is an appetite that will not be governed by another's palate: and one so conversant in female confessions as you, must know that the combats of love and filial duty are very frequent. [*He nods.*

[*Fills to him again.*

You forgot your liquor, Sir.

[*He drinks.*

Hub. You talk very well, child, in the woman's way.——But I wish you would talk a little reasonably. [*Nods.*

Flor. What, refuse to pledge a woman!

[*She fills again.*

Hub. Bless me! I had almost forgot myself again. [*Drinks.*] I am unmannerly I must confess. You may think what you please, but I affirm that disobedience is not only unbeseeming, but sinful. [*Nods.*] Now a daughter not being a free agent——[*Nods.*

[*She fills again.*

Flor. How, Father *Hubert*, is that your doctrine? Are we born slaves, Father?

[*Very loud.*

Hub. I profess, Madam, you made me start.

Flor. You see the liquor stands before you still, Father. You always forget yourself.

Hub. If I were not very thirsty, I could have sworn I drank before [*Drinks.*] You say right, Madam. No, Madam, I beg pardon, you say wrong. [*Nods.*] But what was it you said?——Obedience, or disobedience, or some such thing——I have drank already——don't awaken me.

Flor. He's fast. He snores delightfully. Father!—Father *Hubert*——all's safe——nobody at his own sermons could sleep more heartily——just out of one cage into another——So, now for my charming fellow! The landlord is my friend, and shall direct

rect

rect me to him. So. ——— Very sound! Sleep on
in peace. Adieu! [Exit.

S C E N E III.

Hubert asleep, Plowdon, Grift.

Plowdon. IS not this vexatious, neighbour *Grift*? Is it not reasonable for a man to be in a passion with this provoking puppy? To be out of the way just at this instant! My cane trembles in my hand to be at him. ——— What a woundy deal of trouble do we fathers take to marry our daughters. And yet the hussleys have not one bit of gratitude.

Grift. You should consider, master *Plowdon*, for all the trouble you take before marriage, they have all the trouble after.

Plowd. 'Tis not to be borne, neighbour *Grift* ——— And I take it unfriendly of you to persuade me to keep my temper. ——— But Father *Hubert* by this time may have brought my daughter to a better disposition. ——— What a dickins! ——— asleep! And the girl still confined to her closet!

Grift. Nay, Sir, I don't think Father *Hubert* so much in the wrong. He hath given her good advice, but would not trust her with it, without locking her up, that it might not be thrown away upon her.

Plowd. Furies! What is the meaning of this? Father *Hubert*, ——— Father *Hubert*, ——— Father *Hubert*. ———

[Stamps.

Hub. I beg your pardon, Madam, your reproof is just. I should indeed have forgotten to take my glass had not you put me in mind of it. [Yawns, and drinks.

Plowd. What have you done with my daughter?

Hub. I, I, I. ———

Plowd.

Plowd. What have you done with yourself?

Hub. I, I can't——

Plowd. Give me the key. Give it me.

Hub. Good-lack-a-day, and is it you, Sir?

[*Plowdon snatches the key, runs into the closet, and returns.*]

Plowd. Gone! Escaped! Plague! thunder and combustion! This is all roguery and contrivance. Answer me! What have you done with my daughter?

Hub. Nothing, master *Plowdon*, upon my word, nothing.

Plowd. Come, come, Father, I will have satisfaction in this affair. What have you done with my daughter, I say?

Hub. If there is any thing done, 'twas all her own doing; I know nothing of it; and indeed how could I, when I was asleep?

Plowd. Answer me you, you, you——Your function keeps me from using you as I ought, so I shall say nothing shocking or indecent.——You have, I fear, Father, been a rogue in this affair.——You know, I know you to be a rascal.——Were you bribed by her or her fellow,——or both? You treacherous, pimping——But I say no more.——Now is it not a hard case, neighbour *Grist*, that a man can't talk to these fellows in the style they deserve?——What is become of her? For I will know.

Hub. Is she gone then?

Plowd. Let me have no lying excuses. If you won't tell me when I speak to you civilly, you must take what follows; for I won't make myself sick, and smother my passion any longer for you nor any man alive. You hypocritical, pimping——but I forbear,——and you are witness, neighbour *Grist*, that I give no foul language. Are you dumb? Have you slept away invention? Have you never a lye awake? You must then still be asleep for certain.

Hub.

Hub. So you say she is gone. 'Tis somewhat unlucky, I grant you. Keep your temper. But who, I pray, is she gone with?

Plowd. Ay, who is she gone with? Who have *you* sold her to? Into what bawd's hands have you put her?

Hub. For shame, master *Plowdon*, talk more decently, I beg you.

Plowd. Answer me.—I will have an answer. Take notice, neighbour *Grift*, that I give him not one indecent expression, though the rascal deserves every thing one could say to him.

Hub. Pray, Sir, don't be scurrilous. 'Tis your and my misfortune, and we must make the best of it. I own I was asleep.

Grift. Nay, so far indeed, Father *Hubert* says true.—He really was asleep.

Plowd. Neighbour *Grift*, you lye, (excuse the expression.) 'Twas all dog's sleep. I am not to be bantered, Father. [*Walking about in a passion.*] I am not to be abused and imposed upon—Pimp! [*Walking.*] It would make a man mad to be tricked, bubbled, and laughed at by such an——impudent rascal.

Grift. You forgot yourself: only think, dear Sir, that I am to be witness for you; an impudent rascal is an indecent expression.

Plowd. Mind your own affairs, neighbour *Grift*. What is it to you what I call him? I am in a passion: I own it. And when a man is in a passion, expressions go for nothing, that you know; and you know too that he deserves much worse usage from my hands. You know it, I say, neighbour *Grift*.

SCENE

S C E N E IV.

Plowdon, Grist, Hubert, Spigot, Alison, Shipman.

Alison. **B**LESS us all! what's the matter?

Spig. Mischief to be sure.

Shipm. They have fallen foul on one another, that's for certain.

Spig. Keep your temper. What has provoked you, dear Sir? Keep your temper.

Plowd. I'll keep it or not keep it, as I think fit. So, now you are answered, Landlord. [*Walks about muttering.*] An undermining deceitful dog!

Alif. But, master *Plowdon*, to my thinking, surely 'tis not worth while to be in a passion, if you keep it all to yourself. Now when we women fall out, we generally let our neighbours be the better for it.

Plowd. A son of a whore! [*Walks about muttering.*]

Alif. Gracious! What is the matter with the old Gentleman, goodman *Grist*?

Shipm. Mayhap the Gentleman may be like our captain, who swears and swaggers every now and then, with he does not know who, and he does not know why; only to show his authority.

Grist. To be sure he puts me in mind of my wife. Speaking to him does but make him worse. She would never cool if I did not leave her to herself.

Alif. Why really, goodman *Grist*, I must confess that was always my way too. And, say what you will, what men call good advice is very provoking.

Plowd. My daughter, Dame——

Alif. Ay, to be sure: I knew by the violence of your passion it could only be with a wife or a daughter, or some special good friend.

Plowd.

Plowd. I am cool, Dame, and you may talk to me now——My daughter, as I was saying, hath been seduced by that son of a——I was almost provoked to let slip a hasty expression, or so.——My daughter, Dame, is inveigled, and run away.

Alif. If that is the case, you had better reserve your passion for some more convenient opportunity, and look for your daughter.

Plowd. Let it be your care neighbour *Grist*, to find me out *Doggrell*; myself, with my Landlord and his friend, will pursue the wench. And my good Dame in the mean time shall pump intelligence out of that prevaricating——out of Friar *Hubert*. As a woman, Dame, you must understand somewhat of prevarication, and you can deal with him in his own way. At him, Madam! Do what you can for me. We'll soon be with you again.

S C E N E V.

Alifon, Hubert,

Alifon. **I**F he finds his daughter, 'tis my opinion, he will find one with her who had found her before. But what's all this to me? I have affairs of my own upon my hands. That Mrs. *Busy* could not be found is very provoking. This is the first time I ever bilked an assignation. If I could have got the habit, by this time I had secured my man; inclination was ready; nothing but that was wanting. Gracious! Father *Hubert*, I never once thought of you.

Hub. Ah! Dame, if ever a man deserved excommunication——

Alif. Nay, for that matter, Father, if you have let the young wench escape, I should not have the worse

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opinion

opinion of you. Why, sure, you should succour the distressed. Gracious! now, only think of the good you may have done. By saving the girl from being married against her consent, you may have saved her from giving her husband daily provocations, and her husband from thousands of daily oaths: You may have kept him and his estate from being eaten out by harlots, and her from variety of adulteries——You may, sure, have done much good by it.

Hub. But I have not done it, I tell you, Dame. I know nothing of her escape. And so I leave you all in your errors.

S C E N E VI.

Alison, Doggrell, Busy.

Doggrell. SO, the ceremony is over, and I am happy.
Busy. It will be the pleasure of my life to make you so.

Dog. Upon the first discovery of my marriage the old fellow may be brutal; and an unmannerly word to your Ladyship may provoke me. So, dear Madam, for a minute or two keep out of sight, and let me stand the brunt of his anger alone. [*Busy in the Nun's dress retires.*] I thought to have found the old Put my guardian here. My good Dame, I am infinitely obliged to you.

Alis. Nay, don't be out of hope. She was disappointed to the last degree, that she could not keep her assignation. Gracious, Sir! I was as much vexed, sure, as you could be for your life. And she bade me tell you——

Dog. But hold, Dame! Here comes *Plowdon*.

SCENE

S C E N E VII.

Alison, Doggrell, Busy, Plowdon, Spigot, Grist, Shipman.

Plowdon. SO, neighbour *Grist*, you could, it seems, learn no tale or tidings of him. But he's here, I see. Now, are not you a puppy, *Frank*? Had you been in the way, all my care by this time had been over. Did not you promise me that you would make an end of this affair, and marry?

Dog. I won't suffer these liberties, Sir; and so, Sir, I venture to tell you boldly that I am married.

Plowd. 'Tis all over then. I forgive thee, boy, and am heartily glad 'tis no worse. Had you invited me to the wedding, you might have saved me from an ocean of passion. But where, *Frank*, is my wench? My anger is blown over; 'twas an innocent whim, and I forgive you both.

Alif. Gracious! And what is become of my affair all this while? This young fellow's proceeding (to my thinking) is somewhat unaccountable. [*Aside.*]

Dog. Now, Sir, as a proof that I am married, this is my Lady, I know nothing of your daughter, and I don't value your anger a rush. The law shall give me my own; and so, Sir, your servant.

Plowd. Where will this end? Mankind is in a combination against me. — I'm dumb. I shall burst.

Alif. And are you married then, Lady? Gracious! Madam, to be sure I never was so surprized at any thing in all my life!

Busy. 'Tis to no purpose now to conceal myself. The thing must come out. Don't you know me then, Dame?

Alif. 'Slidikins! Mrs. *Busy*! I am finely jilted, I find! to take the advantage of an old woman too! Was this well done, Mrs. *Busy*?

Dog. What do you mean, Madam? Who are you talking to?

Alif. To your wife, you say.

Dog. To a woman of rank and distinction.

Alif. To the woman of a woman of rank and distinction. Why, you are bit, fool. Look upon her, and be convinced. Since the thing is done, shew thyself, girl, and put it out of dispute. 'Tis good to have witnesses in these matters. When a man is in the case, the women, sure, stick at nothing; and I can't blame the girl. Mrs. *Doggrell*, I wish you joy with all my heart.

Dog. A chambermaid!

Busy. Till you did me the honour to take me out of that condition. I shall always, Sir, with gratitude remember the obligation.

Dog. And is it to you, my good Dame, that I am obliged for this eternal disgrace?

Alif. After what you have done by me, Madam, I am sure I of all womankind ought not to give you a recommendation; but when a thing is over — I always love to take the good-natured side. Let me tell you, Mr. *Doggrell*, though by her circumstances she was reduced to service, she is very well born, and never the less a gentlewoman.

Plowd. Now that this puppy is made a fool of, is some sort of satisfaction. — My daughter was not well enough born for you, coxcomb?

Alif. Things have taken their turn, you see, in spite of us. This young fellow hath play'd the fool without your approbation. Your daughter too, take my word for it, wherever she is, hath done something or other without your approbation too. So, by the way of a frolic or so, why should we not divert ourselves? What think you, my heart of oak, have not I a bonny complexion?

plexion? Nay, look upon me, I have a face like an ancient medal, antiquity does but add to its value. Revenge yourself by your own marriage, and baulk all their contrivances.

Plowd. And so have the revenge light upon my own head too.—I wish women would be less impertinent.

S C E N E VIII.

Alison, Doggrell, Busy, Plowdon, Spigot, Grist, Shipman, Merit, Florinda.

Plowdon. **A**Y, yonder the jade comes, and the fellow with her! She thinks now 'tis nothing but to ask blessing and have it. I can't bear the sight of the hussy.

Flor. Your pardon, Sir.

Plowd. You shall starve—you jade.

Merit. Your forgiveness and blessing, Sir.

Plowd. You shall be hanged—you dog—A blessing! a halter!

Alif. Nay, but master *Plowdon*—

Plowd. Furies! I'll hear none of you—I hate you all.

Alif. Be calm; dear, good Sir, have patience.

Plowd. Was there ever such an unreasonable request! A woman now with half the provocation would be ten times as angry as I am.—My blessing! A halter, a halter, a halter!

[*Exit Plowdon.*]

S C E N E IX.

Alison, Doggrell, Busy, Spigot, Grist, Shipman, Merit, Florinda, Sir Harry Gauntlet, Myrtila.

Alison. **S**IR Harry Gauntlet and Myrtila! Gracious! who would have thought it? Every body provided for but me! This is very hard now. But I have had my husbands, and buried my husbands; and what can any woman wish more? So I must even be content.

Myrt. My dear *Florinda*, I wish you joy. I was impatient, child, to see you so happy as I know you must be at this instant; and I know it will add to your pleasure to see me happy. There is no opposing fatality. Sir *Harry* has succeeded at last, and I am married, child. Now are not you mightily surprized?

Sir Harry. Seriously, Mr. *Doggrell*, I know her to be a Gentlewoman. She hath a taste too of poetry, and she herself writes very prettily. Believe me, she will prove a very agreeable companion. I know my wife will think herself happy in the continuance of Mrs. *Doggrell's* friendship, as I shall in my improving my acquaintance with you.

Flor. Never think of it, Madam—'tis not to be done—my father was so outrageous, and is so positive, a reconciliation is impossible.

Sir Harry. I have some interest with him. Upon the first occasion it shall all be employed in your service.

Enter a Drawer.

Draw. The Pilgrims, Ladies in the next room are preparing for a dance. If you like it, with your leave, they will come among you, and will be glad that you would join in the entertainment.

Grist. By all means, by all means.

Myrt. It will be very agreeable and obliging.

A DANCE.

A D A N C E.

Alis. Now, Madam, is not this better than being a Nun? To be caged in a convent for life, and made a Priest's singing-bird! But women have a tendency to what is good—I always thought so.

Sir Harry. Or a tendency to superstition.

When superstition hath the mind engross'd,
Judgment is laid asleep, and reason lost;
By fancy'd omens we have joy and sorrow,
Sit moaped at home, or gad abroad to-morrow;
By that we sink our joys, our fears enhance,
And all we do, is right or wrong by chance.
But shall I censure visionary schemes?
Myrtilla, no.—I thank your stars and dreams.

Alis. And with good reason, in troth! Besides, let me tell you *Sir Harry*, you may call it superstition, or what you will—I do insist upon it, as I said before, that we women, sure, have a tendency to what is good.

For through the sex this pious humour runs;
Were there no men, all women would be Nuns.

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